MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

#309 / FEBRUARY 2009 // $4 U.S. & CANADA //

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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TOP 10

For what it's worth, here's some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

JUSTIN BRIGGS

CRUDE-Just Go Go Ahead-EP
SLOWMOTIONS-Mystery/Dance-45
AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE/EXTORTION-EP
BRAIN KILLER-8"
SEX/VID-Communal Living 12"
KARKABA-Beldurrik Gabe-LP
MIND ERASER-Conscious/Unconscious-12"
PIST-all 3 LPs
CAPITALIST CASUALTIES/HELLNATION-split-LP
ORDER OF THE VULTURE-Death Discipline-LP

TIM BROOKS

MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
SECRET PROSTITUTES-Scandinavia '79-EP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
NODZZZ-LP
JACUZZI BOYS-45
AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split EP
NERVES-One Way Ticket-LP
SHORT RABBITS-Dying By Inches-LP
SUBVERSION-Child Abuse-EP
DAS KAPITAL-Ben, We're Jealous-EP

ROBERT COLLINS

AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE/EXTORTION-EP
ICON GALLERY-Rertribution-EP
TO WHAT END?/WITCH HUNT-split-EP
DIOS MIO-Prey To God-EP
CAPITALIST CASUALTIES/HELLNATION-split-LP
HOLY SHIT-live
NARSAAK-Prasina-EP
PIST-all 3 LPs
MIND OF ASIAN-live
DUCK AND COVER-live

PAUL CURRAN & ARIEL AWESOME

AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split EP
BLATZ/FILTH-split 2xCD
CRUDE-Just Go Go Ahead-EP
FINALLY PUNK-Coffee, Tea and Misery-EP
FINAL WARNING-CD
ICON GALLERY-Retribution-EP
NODZZZ-LP
OBSERVERS-Down on Today-EP
THE PIST-Input Equals Output Vol. 1 & 2-LP
THE RATS-LP

LAYLA GIBBON

SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
NERVES-One Way Ticket-LP
CULT RITUAL-Haunted Ground-EP
TYRANNA-Back Off Baby-EP
FINALLY PUNK-Coffee, Tea, and Misery-EP
BUKKAKE BOYS-Splendid Thoughts-EP
RATS-LP
BLACK TIME-ICU-EP
JT IV-Cosmic Lightning-LP
OBSERVERS-Down On Today-EP

BOB GOLDIE

HEARTBEEPS-A Boring Life With No Guitar-EP
V/A-Den Magiska Cirkeln Hardcore-EP
999-Death In Soho-LP
NERVES-One Way Ticket-LP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
TYRANNA-Back Off Baby-EP
MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robots-45
BUKKAKE BOYS-Splendid Thoughts-EP
AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split-EP
TOTAL ABUSE-CD

KENNY KAOS

AVENUE ROSE/LET'S DANCE-split EP
EYES AND EARS-Howl At the Moon-45
THE WITHDRAWALS-Paranoid Delusions EP
SLOWMOTIONS-Mystery/Dance-45
HEARTBEEPS-A Boring Life With No Guitar-EP
ACCELERATORS/ZATOPEKS-split EP
SECRET PROSTITUTES-Scandinavia '79-EP
INTELLIGENCE-Fido Your Leash Is Too Long-EP
TYRANNA-Back Off Baby-EP
NODZZZ-LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

CANDY SNATCHERS-Doin' Time-EP
COUNTRY TEASERS/EZEE TIGER-split LP
BLACK TIME-ICU-EP
A.H. KRAKEN-Gianna Michaels-EP
TEENAGE PANZERKORPS-Games For Slaves-LP
KING KHAN-It's a Lie / Congratulations I'm Sorry-45
LITTLE JOHNNY & THE SILVERTONES-45
NODZZZ-LP / JACUZZI BOYS-45
THE RATS-LP
PYLON-live

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only , or demo releases to the address on the previous page.

RAY LUJAN

UNWELCOME GUESTS-The Painter-EP
LOBSTER KILLED ME-The Wind Is Mine-EP
BLANK DOGS-The Fields-LP
GOOD LUCK-Into Lake Griffey-CD
THE PROZACS-Playing the Chords-CD
HEAD HOME-Outside My Window-LP
AVENUE ROSE-Electric-EP
MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
EYES AND EARS-Howl At the Moon-45
FIRST OFFENSE-The Faith-CD

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split-EP
BAD THOUGHTS-both EPs
MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
NODZZZ-LP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
BLACK TIME-ICU-EP
BUG CENTRAL-Welcome To Deadtown-CD
ICON GALLERY-Rertribution-EP
ONE LAST WISH-LP
YOUNG OFFENDERS/DIRTY CUPCAKES -live

MARK MURRMANN – NEW TOP TEN!!!

LITTLE JOHNNY & THE SILVERTONES-45
SLOWMOTIONS-Mystery/Dance-45
RATS-LP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
HEARTBEEPS-Boring Life with No Guitar-EP
SHORT RABBITS-Dying By Inches-LP
DEFECT DEFECT/AUTISTIC YOUTH-live
NERVES-One Way Ticket-LP
SECRET PROSTITUTES-Skandinavia '79-EP
TYRANNA-Back Off Baby-EP

BRUCE ROEHRS

NO TALK-Tighten the Noose-EP
NEVER HEALED-Forever Never Ends-CD
SELF DESTRUCT-All My Friends Are Dead-EP
NARSAAK-Prasina-EP
BRANCH DAVIDIAN-Party O'Clock-EP
SECRET PROSTITUTES-Skandinavia '79-EP
OMAISUUS VAHINKO-Sotaa Maaailmaa-EP
CANDY SNATCHERS-Doin' Time-EP
CULT RITUAL-Haunted Ground-EP
FIRST BLOOD-live

FRED SCHRUNK

MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
BROWNTROUT/DRUNKEN BOAT-split-EP
AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split-EP
UNWELCOME GUESTS-The Painter-EP
FINALLY PUNK-Coffee, Tea, and Misery-EP
NO CONNECTION-Second T o None-EP
NODZZZ-LP
THE RATS-LP
NÜ SENSAE-LP
RVIVER / DEFECT DEFECT-live

CISSIE SCURLOCK

CRUDE-Just Go Go Ahead-EP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
TEENAGE PANZERKORPS-Games For Slaves-LP
BUKKAKE BOYS-Splendid Thoughts-EP
CULT RITUAL-Haunted Ground-EP
MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
SLOWMOTIONS-Mystery/Dance-45
SUBVERSION-Child Abuse-EP
NARSAAK-Prasina-EP/BLACK TIME-EP
OMAISUUS VAHINKO-EP/KARKABA-LP

MARTIN SORRONDEGUY

CRUDE-Just Go Go Ahead-EP
TYRANNA-Back Off Baby-EP
MARKED MEN-Fortune/Like Robot-45
CULT RITUAL-Haunted Ground-EP
AUTISTIC YOUTH/COLA FREAKS-split-EP
SLOWMOTIONS-Mystery/Dance-45
BUKKAKE BOYS-Splendid Thoughts-EP
BLANK DOGS-The Fields-LP
SEX/VID-Communal Living-12"
KARKABA-Beldurrik Gabe-LP

ZINE TOP TEN

America? #15
Communicating Vessels #20
Distort #18
Doll #257
Kissoff #13
Punk//Ping//Ponk #1 & 2
Razorcake #47
Self-Aware #2
$pare ¢hange #19
Todays Favorite Adult Actors...

MRR SHITWORKERS

Sam Alvarado
Judy Balmin
Julia Booze
Tim Brooks
Eric Butterworth
Robert Collins
Talya Cooper
Arwen Curry
Paul Curran
Helen Degenerate
Alex Dorfman
Sean Dougan
Robert Eggplant
Jonathan Floyd
Steve Funyon
Sara Gillespie
Bob Goldie
Vernon Hadley
Melanie Hill
Mike Howes
Jill Hubley
Meredith Jones
Ramsey Kanaan
Will Kinser
Phil Lantz
Michael Lucas
Ray Lujan
Hal MacLean
Jeff Mason
Scott Moore
Ryan Murphy
Paco Mus
Jon Off A Building
Randy Ransone
Casey Ress
Fred Schrunk
Martin Sorrondeguy
Christy Thornton
Tress
Kate Wadkins
Ned Wells
Peter Avery
Michelle Barnhardt
Justin Briggs
Dan Butler
Karoline Collins
Rob Coons
Chris Corry
Craigums
Andy Darling
Mark Dober
Brian Dooley
John Downing
Lowell Fletcher
Travis Fristoe
Hèctor Garcia
Dan Goetz
Zane Grant
Cassie Harwood
Ben Howell
Chris Hubbard
Sarah Janet
Clara Jeffers
Kenny Kaos
Vinnie La Russa
Mike Longshot
Paul Lucich
Jesse Luscious
Marissa Magic
Kevin McCarthy
Andrew Murphy
Mark Murrmann
Golnar Nikpour
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Rotten Ron Ready
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Jess Scott
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Maxwell Tremblay
Andrew Underwood
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XYosefX

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Stuart Schrader
Martin Sorrondeguy
Timmyfuck
Todo Destruido
Brace Belden
Graham Booth
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Lance Hahn
George Impulse
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Mattilda
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A WHOLE CRAPLOAD OF MRR BACK ISSUES...

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#161/Oct '96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#175/Dec '97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April '98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May '98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June '98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept '98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#186/Nov '98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec '98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, 3rd Party, No Class.

#188/Jan '99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb '99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar '99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April '99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May '99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June '99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July '99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug '99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres.

#196/Sept '99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, "Epicenter Zone '90-'99".

#197/Oct '99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#199/Dec '99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan '00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#204/May '00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#206/July '00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug '00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept '00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct '00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov '00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine. Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar '01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April '01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#218/July '01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#221/Oct '01. The G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B'67.

#222/Nov '01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice's Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene, extended news section, "Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,"

#223/Dec '01. "US Policy in the Middle East," "Revisiting 1948," Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan '02. "Legislation Since Sept. 11, Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb '02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86'd, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#227/Apr '02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June '02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July '02. Bitchin', Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug '02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen's Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept '02. "No Future" article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct '02. "All Ages" article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon's Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov '02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec '02. Anti-war Special Issue. Articles: "Reading for Democracy," "War on Iraq?" "Unfinished American Revolution," Resource Guide, "US Involvement in Iraq,""Axis of Empire." Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan '03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#238/Mar '03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr '03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May '03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June '03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July '03. Pensacola & San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine , Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug '03. "Media Alliance and the FCC," Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept '03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia's Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct '03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov '03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec '03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, "Punk Babies on Tour" Article.

#248/Jan '04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday '29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb '04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar '04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, "La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene," Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April '04. The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl, Vrah.

#252/May '04. Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaëi Branchaw photos.

#253/June '04. Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI.

#254/July '04. No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, scene reports from Portland, Boston and Germany.

#255/Aug '04. "Punk's Not Dead, Reagan Is" Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/Sep '04. The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland, Indiana, England.

#257/Oct '04 The Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia.

#258/Nov '04. Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo's.

#259/Dec '04. Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, photos from Japan, SoCal & the Bay Area.

#260/Jan '05. Technocracy, The Total End, Only Crime, True North, Partisans, For The Worst, Dick Spikie, Straight to Hell, Black Cross, Action, Ergs, Rusty Nails, Queer Activism in London, Greg Shaw tribute, John Peel tribute, Andrew "Stig" Sewell tribute, Beijing punk photos.

#261/Feb '05. Year End Top Tens, Riistetyt, Lost Cherrees, Complete Control, Cheap Sex, Gasoline Please, Beerzone, Greyskull, MOTO, Water Into Beer Fanzine, Swe-Punk scumpit, Japan punk photos, Bay Area punk photos, Texas, Russia, and Malaysia scene reports.

#262/March '05. Kärnvapen Attack, Neo Boys, Catholic Boys, Dead Moon, Wreckage, Frantix, Armitage Shanks, Wendy Kroys, To What End?, Cell Block 5, Bent Outta Shape, Ah-Nah Tron, Slovakia, Indonesia, and Illinois scenes.

#263/April '05. All Crusties Spending Loud Night 2004, Bombenalarm, Battleship, APA, The Black Lips, Words That Burn, Flamingo 50, The Low Budgets, Mellakka, I Object, Antisect, Bay Area scene report, South Coast UK scene report.

#264/May '05. Crime, Love Songs, Bruce Banner, Intent, The Holy Mountain, Have Heart, The Bill Bondsmen, The Real Losers, archive photos, Bay Area scene photos, Taiwan and Rochester scene reports.

#265/June '05. Endless Nightmare, Hard Skin, Kolokol, Amebix, Transistor Transistor, The Safes, The Detonators, Finland scene report, France scene report, SoCal scene report.

#266/July '05. The Carbonas, MDC, Destrux, Unkind, Hiretsukan, Giant Haystacks, Ohuzaru, Teenage Harlets, Michigan scene report, San Diego scene report, Eugene, OR scene report, photos.

#267/August '05. Knugen Faller, Sleeper Cell, Motorama, Gulcher Records history, Army of Jesus, The Slicks, Thee Merry Widows, Rotten Sound, The Faction (UK), Czech and New Zealand scene reports.

#268/September '05. Signal Lost, Gulcher Records history part two, Teenage Bottlerocket, Mattilda (aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore), The Spectacle, Bang Sugar Bang, Chumbawamba, Reason of Insanity, Forward To Death, Flyer art, Florida Scene Report, Bay Area scene report, photos.

#269/October '05. Hammer, Desastre, Human Eye, Les Bellas, Gasmask Terror, Randy "Biscuit" Turner tribute, Stalag 17 (UK), Stepbrothers, Retching Red, Weaving the Deathbag, Gather, Chicago and SoCal scene reports.

#270/November '05. Clorox Girls European Tour, Czolgosz, Regulations, Time Flys, Taxi, No More Lies, Oil!, Paddy Costello of the Dillinger Four, Smartpils, Revenge of Mongoloid, Pisschrist, Scene reports: Puerto Rico, UK, Russia.

#271/December '05. Besthöven, Abductee SD, Tractor Sex Fatality, George Harrison, Deathtoll, Photos by icki, Ice & The Iced, the Ulcers, Chimps Eat Bananas, Deranged / Criminal IQ / Kick'n'Punch Records. Scene reports: Iowa, Maine, Illinois.

#272/January '06. Conga Fury, Let's Grow, Frustration, Bastardass, Icons of Filth, Burial, Hrydjuverk, Cranked Up!, Urrke T & the Midlife Crisis, Tropezio, *Baboon of Sickness* zine. Scene reports: Austin, France, Michigan, Larry Wolfley photos.

#273/February '06. Fuses, Endstand, Out Cold, Pedestrians, Acts of Sedition, BadEatingHabits, Western Addiction, Jesus Fucking Christ, Toxic Waste, Punk photo spread, St. Louis, USA & Brighton, UK scene reports.

#274/March '06. Best of 2005, Formaldehyde Junkies, Brutal Knights, Kansan Uutiset, Hatred Surge, A-Heads, Manikin, Upinatem, Hips, Boston scene report, Punk photo spread.

#275/April '06. History of ABC No Rio (Part One), Ringers, Missbrukarna, '90s garage punk scumpit, Anatomi-71, After the Bombs, Rubella Ballet, RIP Pig Champion, Ricky Adam interview and photographs, Sean McGhee, Hard Skin US tour diary.

#276/May '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part One), History of ABC No Rio (Part Two), Vitamin X Asian Pacific tour diary, Soviet Valves Suburban Death Machine, Frustrations, George Hurchalla, Scene reports: Czech Republic and Greece.

#277/June '06. "Is Business Killing Punk Rock?" business survey (Part Two), Imperial Leather, Boom Boom Kid, Vitamin X Asian Pacific Tour (part two), "How to Make It Big!" by the Phantom Surfers, Magrudergrind, Poland.

#278/July '06. Billy Childish, Death Token, The First Step, Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, Headache City, Deconditioned, Under Pressure, Insuiciety, Instigators, Malaysia Scene, Bay Area Scene Pics.

#279/August '06. Mika Miko, The Fall, Cardiac Arrest, Digger & the Pussycats, Massmord, Insect Warfare, The Astronauts, Canary Islands Photo Spread, Four Slicks, The Fallout, PAWNS, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, & Umeå, Sweden scenes.

#280/September '06. Hjerte Stop, Grupo Sub-1, Desperate Bicycles, Bill Daniel interview and photo spread, APF·Brigade, Disconvenience, Southkore Fest photo spread, Rosenbombs, Up the Voltage, Euro photo spread, Svartenbrandt, Asheville, NC & world wide punk scene reports.

#281/October '06. Out With a Bang, Redd Kross, Derek Lyn Plastic, We March, Alan Milman, Rat Traps, Blood Robots, The Scarred, Gilbert Switzer, Japan & US photo spreads, Sweden & UK scene reports.

#282/November '06. The Feelers, PESD, Toxic Ephex, Auktion, Bruise Violet, *Trust* fanzine, The Homosexuals, The Effigies, Rat City Riot, New York City & North Carolina scene reports.

#283/December '06. Jay Reatard interview & photos, Crimes Against Humanity Records, A Touch of Hysteria, Doris Fanzine, Kvoteringen, '90s Punk Scumpit Part II, Black Chrome, The Dirty Water Club, photos, Tokyo scene report.

#284/January '07. Margaret Thrasher, 924 Gilman at 20 Years, Order of the White Rose, Regress, Subhumans (UK) Part One, Blank Its, Condenada, Genetic Control, photos, Syracuse & San Diego scene reports.

#285/February '07. Randy "Biscuit" Turner of the Big Boys & the early Texas punk scene, Lemuria, Ruin, Subhumans (UK) Part Two, The Blinds, Tranzistors, ANS, Riot This, La Piovra, Bay Area scene pics, Barcelona, Spain scene report.

#286/March '07. Best of 2006, Smartut Kahol Lavan, Electric Kisses, Holy Shit!, Lost Cherrees Part One, Go!, Kraljevo, Serbia, and Bakersfield, CA scene reports.

#287/April '07. Alicja Trout, Keith Rosson (*Avow* zine), Crap Corps, The Vicious, Scum System Kill, Lost Cherrees Part Two, Restless Youth, SBV, Australia, Kyiv, Ukraine, and Pittsburgh, PA scene reports.

#288/May '07. Clockcleaner, Pisschrist, The Rats (Sweden), Conflict (US), The Viletones, Violent Tumor, Czech Republic and East Texas scene reports.

#289/June '07. Ultimo Resorte, Kursk, Masstrauma, Social Circkle, Final Approach, Post Punk Kitchen, Southern Death Cult, Portland Drummers, Timisoara, Copenhagen, and Pampanga scene reports.

#290/July '07. Stormcrow, Merkit, Solid Decline, Monster Squad, Sex Vid, Vivisick, Warkrime, Top Ten, *We're Gonna Fight* zine, White Cross, Berlin scene report.

#291/August '07. *MRR* 25th Anniversary Issue. Martin Sprouse, Tim Yohannon, No Slogan, Ruidosa Inmundicia, Chinese Telephones, Vaseline Children, Anti-System, Dave Roche, 6-page retrospective photo-spread, Kawakami/Disclose obituary, Brazil scene report.

#292/September '07. New Bloods, Chronic Seizure, Outraged, Geriatric Unit, Active Distribution, Gruk, The Mods, No Defences, The Fakes, Trashies Tour Report, Mexico scene report.

#293/October '07. Punk and Immigration Theme issue w/ interviews, articles, and stories. Anti-You, Loser Life, Political Asylum, Olympia scene report.

#294/November '07. The Hipshakes, Neverending Party, Punk & Immigration article, Finally Punk, La Lucha Para La Justicia en Guatemala, Leftover Crack, AOA.

#295/December '07. Surrender, What If Gods Lie?. The Crawlers, 2:20, The Joneses, Libertario Magazine, Bad Samaritans, Shrapnel, Untermensch.

#296/January '08. Hellshock, Mario Panciera, Anathema, The System, Eddy Current Suppression Ring, The Voids, Cinecyde, Kyklooppien Sukupuutto, Punch In The Face, BSA.

#297/February '08. Marie Kanger-Born, Thrillhouse Records, Contaminators, Oi Polloi, Obstruction, I Walk the Line, Utopia

#298/March '08. Best of 2007, Autistic Youth, White Lung, Karma Sutra, Clusterfuck, Sharon Cheslow, Slaughter of the Innocent.

#299/April '08. Government Warning, Age, Off With Their Heads, Guided Cradle, Go It Alone, Fy Fan, Daily Void, Hungarian Scene history.

#300/May '08. NorCal Punk Special: Fix My Head, Black Rainbow, Tank Crimes, Young Offenders, Church Police, Traditional Fools, Six Weeks/Short Fast & Loud, Ecoli.

#301/June '08. Underground Railroad to Candyland, Straightjacket Nation, Red Dons, Spectres, Dean Dirg, Kola, Los Violadores, the Sears, Tentacles of Destruction, Antibodies, Head on Collision.

#302/July '08. Giuda, Wasted Time, Reality, Sin Orden, Teenage Head, Antidote, La Urss, Canadian Rifle, Seasick, Israel & Japan scenes.

#303/August '08. Double Negative, Burnt Cross, Masapunk, Chicago Clitfest, Intifada, Nuclear Death Terror, Raw Power, Unlovables, Waste, Chaos In Tejas photospread, Houston and Grand Rapids scene reports.

#304/September '08. Raymond Pettibon, John Stabb of Government Issue, Cola Freaks, Measure [sa], The Press, XYX, Simply Saucer, Kulturkampf, Andy T, FPO, and Columbia scene report.

#305 October '08. Pierced Arrows, Bum Kon, Deep Sleep, Diente Perro, IRA, Legion of Parasites, Reality Control, Riot City Records, Stations, Test Patterns.

#306 November '08. Brain Handle, Assassins, Diodes (pt. 1), 97 Shiki, Black Dove, No Bunny, Shellshag, Sista Sekunden, Vivian Girls, Animals And Men.

#307 December '08. SOLD OUT!!! Sorry...

#308 January '09. Punks & Film Special with Target Video, Whatever Happened To Susan Jane, Cleveland's Screaming, Mondo Vision, After the Salad Days, You Weren't There, Botinada, Taqwacores, and more.

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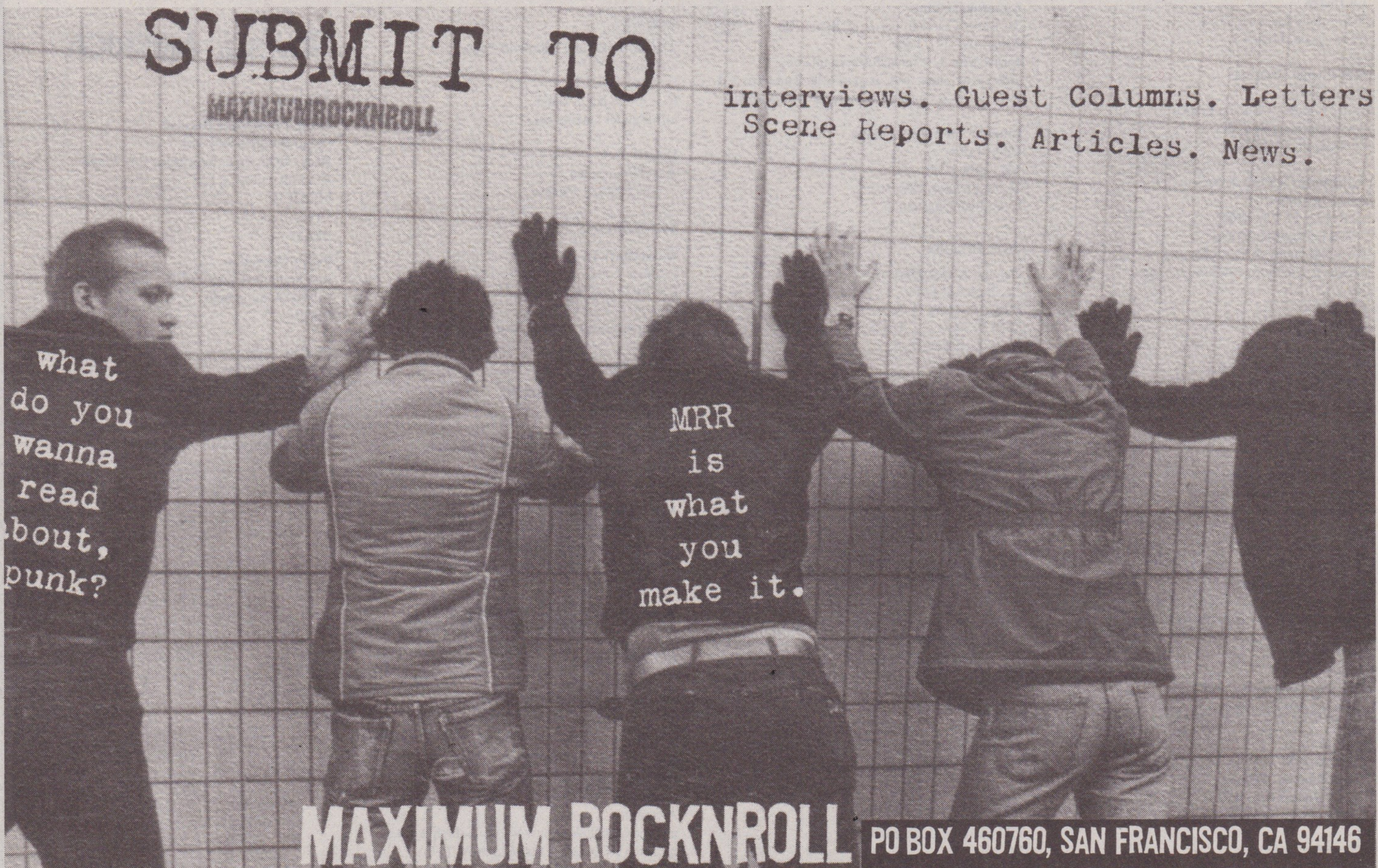
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LETTERS

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Dear MRR—

It was a very unpleasant surprise to hear that you won't run *Don't Try* anymore. Haven't had the chance to read #306 or #307 and to find out why, but I'll just go ahead and say it. The Don't Try column was a breath of fresh air in what was becoming a stale zine. No talk about Fy Fan, Mika Miko, WarKrime or New Bloods. No fucking retro '70s, early '80s or garage Jay Reatard wannabe bands. So what if I didn't listen to 98% of the bands it covered? It was nicely written, it was informative, it was *interesting.* It didn't blow horns for hype bands that were on almost every staffer's top 10 list. It was good.

Each issue was less and less interesting, to be frank. Maybe I lost touch with the present punk/hardcore scene, or maybe the way MRR portrays it is what turns me off. The few good columns that remain aren't worth the space the zines take up in my room anymore. Thirteen years after I first bought a non-used copy of MRR, I bid you farewell.
—Troyan Whore

Dear MRR—

How have you been? It's been a very long time. I'll get to the point as quickly as I can, but please indulge me if I ramble. I lived for you in my teenage years. Every day was spent with newsprint-covered fingers, reading each line from cover to cover in an always futile attempt to sate my appetite for the next installment. Then something happened. My beloved ceased to thrill me, ceased to entertain quite as you had before. Some of it was me, I had changed. I was 18, an adult in my mind (ha, was I wrong there), and I was in a part of the world where my love of DIY punk rock culture was only going to further alienate me from everyone I was around.... and I was already alienated quite enough. But, some of it was you, too. The new editorial staff at the time was changing things. I'm sure they had only the best intentions, but they were dressing you differently. The safety pins and dyed hair, staples of your wardrobe, were being replaced by earth tones and dreadlocks. The faint scent of patchouli lingered where once you had smelled of blood and beer. It was as if the fiery passions of my youthful love had been doused, the embers stamped out and the ashes scattered to the winds. There was no reconciling the differences that had risen up between us. My great love was lost to me, and I ventured forth into the world to seek a new path, a new life, a new love.

Years have passed since then. I still have tattered, water-damaged copies of the issues I so lovingly caressed in the glorious afternoon of my youth, but they sit in darkened closets, their yellowing pages fading like old photographs of a long lost teenage love whose ghostly image defiles the memory of her shapely, supple form and vibrantly optimistic perspective. I have often found myself reminiscing of those days and that marvelous romance we shared, basking in the golden warmth of that long abandoned love. I was sure, until very recently, that those days were behind me, that the magnificent love we shared was to be remembered and treasured forever but that it's flame had eternally been extinguished and could never be rekindled. Then, I heard you on the internet radio whatsit today...

You sound as vibrant and brilliant as ever! I'm so glad you're as well as you appear to be. Listen, baby. I know things haven't been easy for either of us, but I was always at my best when you were by my side (or rolled up and tucked into my pocket). I want you back. I want to make this crazy thing we have work out. Even if it can't work out, even if we're too different for it to ever be near what it once was, I want to know I tried. *we* tried. So, whaddya say I send you $44.10 via paypal and you start coming back over to my place again? I knew you'd say yes. You always did have a soft spot for greenbacks. Oh, Maxi, I can't wait to get my hands on you again, baby. See ya soon.
Love,
—Johnny Narcoleptic

p.s. I did actually re-subscribe and order a record via paypal payment from this email addy. This was partly an attempt to verify that and partly a fun thing for me to do for a few minutes. I really look forward to reading the zine again. I ESPECIALLY look forward to getting new records. Thanks a lot.

Dear MRR—

I' m writing this letter in response to the band Nuclear Death Terror, about my site, www.cahdownloads.com. I created the site in response to customers asking if I knew of anywhere to buy MP3s by punk bands other than ITunes. I thought about it for along time and decided to take action, and took the last of CAH Records money and paid a team of developers thousands of dollars to create cahdownloads. It took over a year to develop and countless hours and headaches for me. I thought I was doing a great thing and couldn't wait for the site to appear online to give people the option of supporting bands digitally for the first time ever without corporations being involved. *Yes,* people do buy MP3s, and the amount of people who buy them increases every month and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

I got the site launched and started looking for bands and their music to sell. Right away a lot of interest was generated after *I contacted* bands and labels. Let's get this straight—the point of a record label is to distribute items and collect royalties for their bands. Logically, rather than contacting every single band on earth I thought it would be much quicker to contact the labels and have them get permission from the bands to sell their songs online. Then instead of having to pay each band individually, I could pay each label for what sold and they could pass the cash onto the band. This worked out great besides a few bands not getting notified, but generally things got cleared up with no problems.

The problem begins with NDT. Fight For Your Mind Records gave me permission, after I contacted them, to post Nuclear Death Terror's CD on the site. It was, and still, is a brand new site and their album sold a whopping two or maybe three copies digitally and went to the top seller list. Seeing that people were buying their music I contacted them about posting the rest of their music on the site, fully thinking they had been contacted and had given permission to post their first CD on the site. Evidently Flox from FFYM Records didn't contact them and I got an email back from NDT with this exact quote: "Hi Nick. I just looked at your site and apparently our record is your top selling download. How much money do you owe us? I can only presume that Flox gave you permission?" They then asked me to take off the CD, which I immediately did with the complete understanding and respect that they didn't want their songs being sold digitally.

I offered to pay them their royalties, just as if a CD or record had sold and thought the problem had been resolved. Flox said he would clear the matter up, and apologized to me. To this date Flox has not publicly cleared it up, and my name has been dragged into the mud because of something I had no control over. On August 14th I received this message from Flox, "I'll get back to you by the end of the week. I'm working twelve hour shifts right now and have no internet access almost. I hope this will end in good terms for everyone. Sorry this has gone so far." I also found this response on NDT's Myspace page from Flox, "I'm the person responsible for this. If there are any rocks to be thrown at I guess I deserve them. This will be resolved in the next days."

So why am I in the middle of this? I' m not calling Flox out, but I think he could have done way, way more to stop and resolve this. I haven't seen one post from him asking NDT to stop posting lies and rumors about me and that sucks because he seems like a good guy and I've been dealing with him for a long time. After a while of NDT accusing me of being a rip off I told them that I had nothing to do with their misunderstanding with the label and that no longer was going to deal with them on this issue, but that I would continue to deal with Flox until it was sorted out.

Unfortunately, Flox didn't follow through so I still have NDT pissed at me. In the column in MRR, and all over the net where NDT post, you can read the letter I sent to them. If I was ripping them off why would I send them an email asking for more of their music with the terms and details of how they'd get paid. I don' t understand their stance on this issue. I fully respect them for not wanting to sell their songs digitally. That's great; they can give away all their songs, and more power to them. But what really irks me is the fact that they started this whole internet-wide campaign to destroy my reputation and name in the punk scene when all I've ever done is try to run the most honest label and operation I ever could. I've dedicated years to this scene and it's really depressing to witness what it has come to over the years with the shit-talking and false rumors.

On a side note I'd like to personally thank NDT for in a small way spreading their internet filth all over the net. For a few weeks my sales spiked and I made more in a few weeks than I had made in the previous six months, which was still very little money but it helped. I'll probably never break even on this site. So please feel free to spread your false rumors and lies about me as it has provided advertising that has saved me a ton of money. So I thank NDT for that—I just wish they wouldn't have gotten all tough guy on me and had been reasonable and understanding of the situation. I have contacted every single band or label that released the bands items on the site with 100% integrity.

Yeah, people stealing MP3s is killing the scene and also the economy is as well. Stealing in this situation is downloading a band's music without their permission. In NDT's case they are fine with it, but a lot of bands don't agree with their music being downloaded for free. Is it normal for highly respected labels like Profane Existence to be going out of business because lack of sales? None of us who run labels have ever, ever seen sales as bad as they are and most labels are struggling to stay alive right now which in turn is affecting the entire DIY Community. If there are no labels, who's going to pay for advertising in zines to keep zines alive?

I hope this letter explains my side of the story and I do apologize to NDT for posting their songs but I was given full permission and I truly feel I did nothing wrong. I'm only guilty of trying to help the scene by creating a brand new medium for punks to purchase music, since the days of CDs and even vinyl are numbered. I hope that all of the people on message boards will try to clear up their shit-talking about this because they didn't and still don't understand the entire issue. I do feel it's a good thing to discuss the MP3 issue, but either way MP3s are here to stay, and with any new technology there will be bumps in the road and small problems like this are expected. I just wish NDT could understand that. I hope this clears some of the issue up.

—Nick
Crimes Against Humanity Records

Dear MRR —

I got a call last Friday from a friend who volunteers at Extreme Noise Records in Minneapolis. He was looking through the new issue of MRR (#307) and noticed that some dude named Jeff sent in a letter calling me out for some lyrics in a song we do (In Defence) called "All Hail the Taco Avenger." My friend thought it was pretty funny that I got called out and didn't want me to miss the mockery that was made at my and my bands expense. So, I went to Extreme Noise to get a copy and see what this guy had to say.

In his letter, Jeff who plays in the band I Hate This from New Jersey (home of the Toxic Avenger ironically enough) calls me out for bringing his band to a pizza joint when they came through Minneapolis on tour. He seemed to think it was rather two-faced of me. After all In Defence has a "militant" song on the issue of Tacos vs. Pizza. When it comes to the ultimate post-show party food, In Defence is known for our pro-taco stance. Until now pizza has gone unchallenged as the scene's favorite post-show party food. Just look at any number of Municipal Waste, Cross Examination or Ramming Speed shirts that sport pizza imagery or bands that have ridiculous names like Pizza High Five, Pizzacore or Party by the Slice. The taco is always overlooked. The taco-tarian lifestyle has not yet been accepted. At shows we feel that it is our mission to spread the word about this struggle. We believe it is time to change things. Despite all the pizza loving propaganda we know that, "cheese on crust with tomato sauce is no kind of food to keep you going in a mosh / when you're looking for good shit to put into your gut remember tacos rule and pizza sucks".

Our message is clear but it is not always welcomed. There are many who would rather we shut up and play meaningless party punk. They don't like our politics. They think we should just go along with the status quo. Jeff you and your band were among those who have openly mocked us for taking a hard taco stance. If you disagree with our lyrics or our actions boycott In Defence as much as you want. Burn our records, don't buy them, spell our name wrong on flyers, whatever… I don't care. But please don't mistake deliberate intent for hypocrisy. When I Hate This came through town and you asked me to take you out to eat, it is true that I brought you to a local pizzeria when I could have taken you to one of our excellent and authentic taco eating establishments. At first glance this might look like I've given up on my taco elitist convictions. Maybe I was being a two-faced hypocrite. The truth is though, Jeff, I just don't like you that much. Why bother giving you the best when you aren't worth it??? If I brought you to a taqueria would you have the pallet to fully appreciate or even comprehend the awesomeness of the taco? No! So why waste a taco on you.

I don't mean to single you out here. Maybe it's just because you are from New Jersey. A pizza-wielding maniac who also happened to be from New Jersey recently attacked me at a show. Over the course of our fifteen-minute set this guy was so pissed off by our message that he ran across the street, paid for a few slices of pizza, came back to the show and smashed them into my face. He also managed to get pizza sauce all over the only set of clean clothes I had left on tour. Apparently he felt the need to represent what he calls "Jersey Pride". He also took the liberty of going on some rant about how New Jersey and New York are in solidarity over pizza. As if New York pizza was something to boast about! The "New York Slice" is totally sub-par at best. For those who are not aware: Chicago style is at the top of the pizza food chain with store bought frozen pizza somewhere towards the bottom and the New York slice somewhere below that (for more on this topic see the In Defence Guide Book to Shitty Pizza p. 26). New York's pizza is definitely not as good as it's hardcore and I know some who argue that NYHC isn't that good. Now I would take issue with that point but I believe arguing over music is a waste of time.

How many people have bitten into a fresh slice of piping hot pizza only to burn the roof of their mouth? Answer: too many. How many have burnt their mouth on a taco??? Answer: none! The choice is clear. Tacos rule. Pizza sucks.

—Ben Crew /IN DEFENCE

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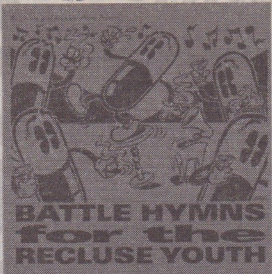

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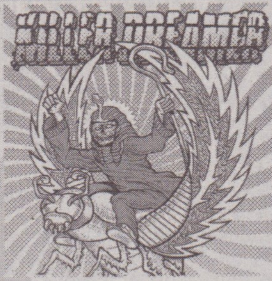

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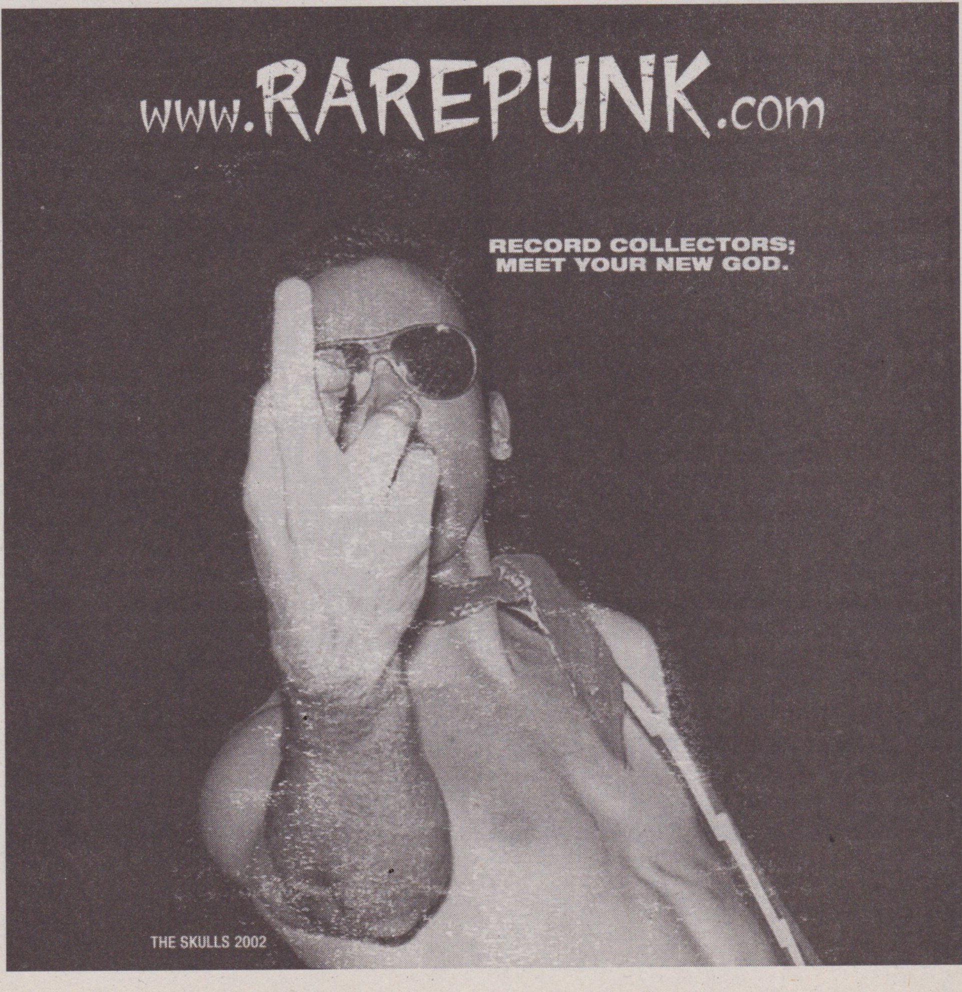

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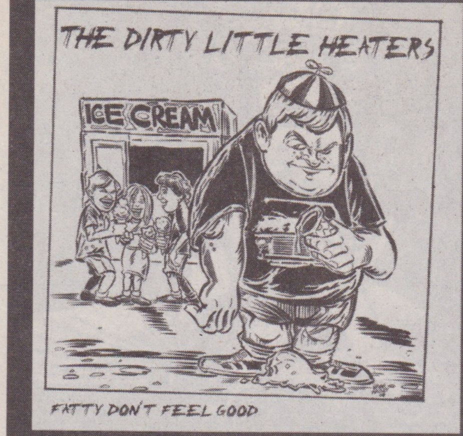
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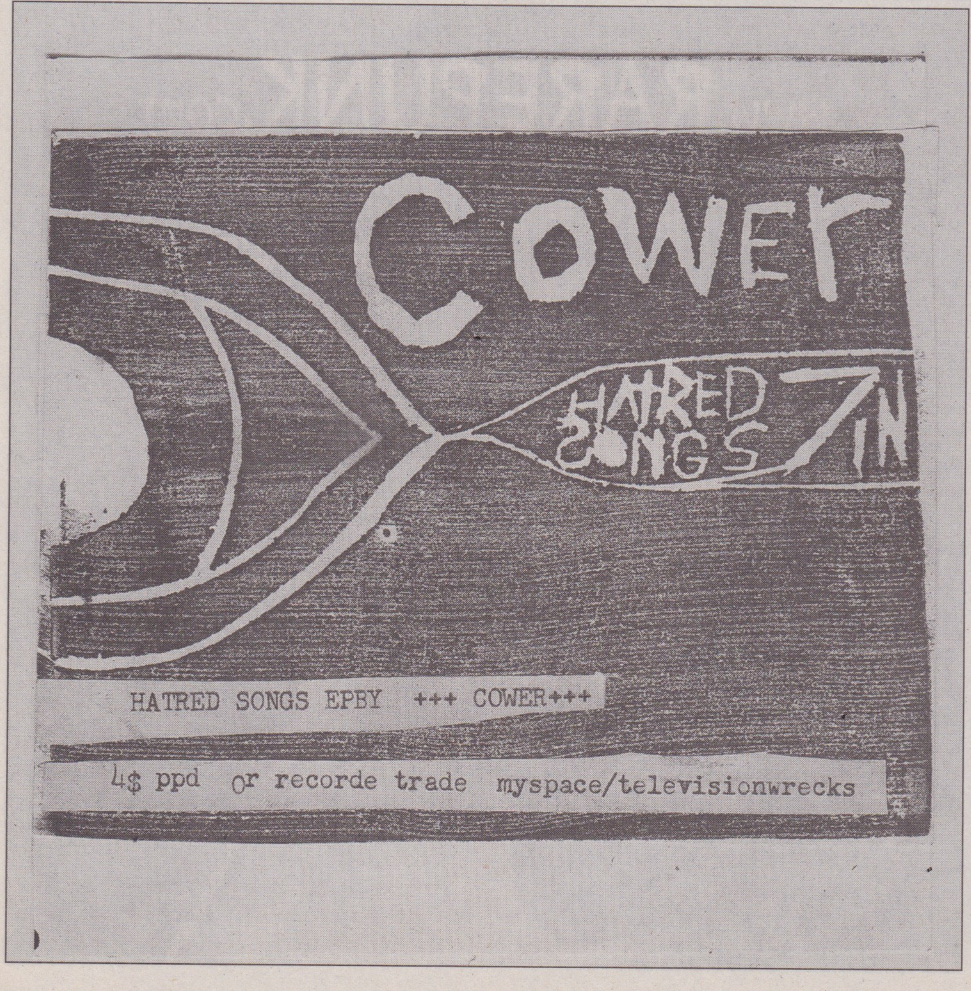
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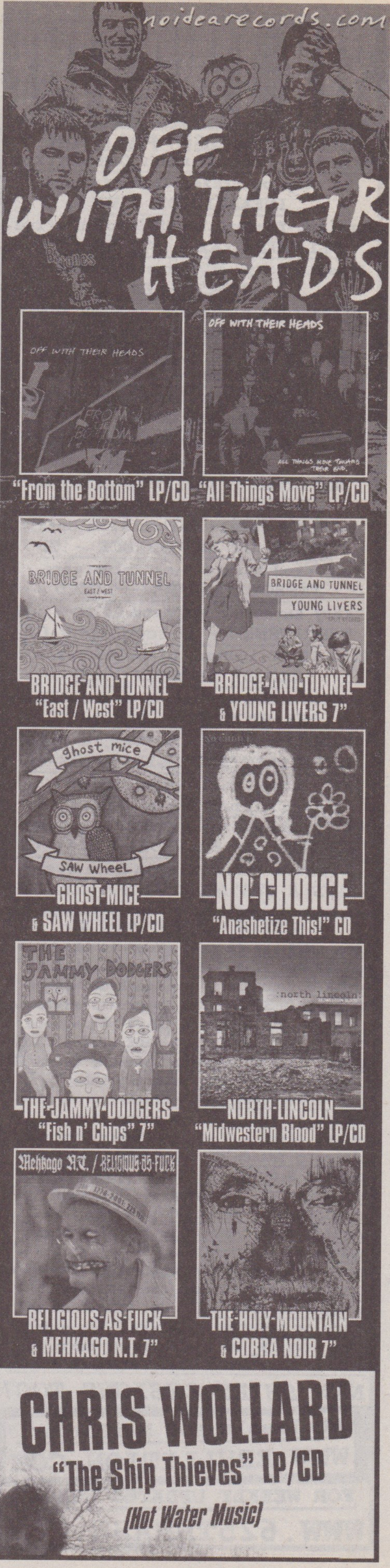
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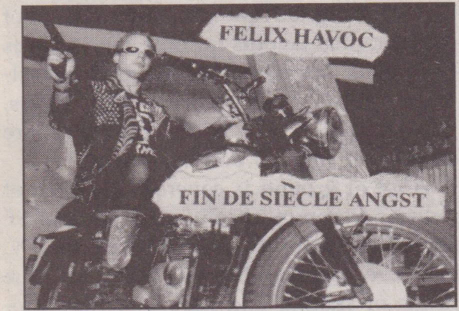
COLUMNS



In *Razorcake* #47, an article by Joseph Steinhardt entitled "The Vinyl Record Bubble?" makes a convincing case that vinyl is experiencing a classic bubble, which will soon burst. While I agree with many of Mr. Steinhardt's points, I think he tends to over-generalize his conclusions in too sweeping a fashion.

Rather than viewing all vinyl as being caught up in a hype bubble that's set to burst, we need to slice up the record scene into different sections and compare each one. In this way we see that there is a vinyl bubble in some of the most recent and least compelling records, as well as a few "rare" records from the '80s—but many of the most sought-after records are not in a bubble at all, and probably won't go down in price ever.

A lot of collectors have drawn a parallel between the last few years in vinyl and the comic book scene of the late '80s and early '90s. Steinhardt draws the same conclusions—basically that collector mania has flooded the market with manufactured rarities, which are mostly bought by speculators as an investment, rather than for the merit of the content within. With comics, there was a surge of interest in limited editions, alternate covers, etc. These rose quickly in value, and soon every comic company flooded the market with foil-stamped covers, holograms, and all sorts of gimmicks. People were buying multiple copies of every issue on speculation, hoping the value would go up. When the bubble eventually burst, the comics became worthless, and would-be speculators rushed to dump their extra comics.

During this time period, I was at a comic shop and overheard a conversation between a comic buyer and the owner. The buyer asked the owner if the comic he was buying was going to be "worth something someday." The owner told him that if he wanted to speculate, he should play the stock market, or go out and try to find rare old comics in attics and basements. He argued that the buyer should only buy the comic for the content. "If there's three dollars worth of story and artwork in the book, buy it. Otherwise, don't." We all know how the story ended with comics, and it's plausible that the same thing is happening to records. However, records also have a lot of other factors going for them that comics didn't.

First off, while I agree that there have been way too many bands, labels and records in the past few years, and although the DIY vinyl distro scene is undergoing a massive contraction, I think much of this overproduction is going to dry up on its own. *Some* records are definitely in a classic bubble. The past few years have seen the rise of very manufactured rarities and limited records that sell out in a matter of minutes, only to be resold at many times the price on online auction sites. This has led to a cottage industry of speculation and reselling that created a whole subgenre of records: "eBay gold." Almost all of these sorts of records are overvalued. Some speculators bought extra copies that are going to lose value and get dumped, and many of the high priced releases of recent years will drop in price. Here the "comics" analogy is the strongest.

Music holds strong emotional and nostalgic associations for people. Many people have records that they love that are worth very little in the collector market. People remember records that were playing during special moments in their life, or will forever remember a house show or party associated with a band or record, no matter how "bad" it might be. On another tip, crucial records are just that—crucial records. Many a record's value is driven not by its perceived rarity, but by the awesomeness of its content. It's expensive because a lot of people want it. These records might not drop much in value at all. If you go into most used record stores, there aren't very many really killer records lying around. That's not because the store sucks, it's because the killer records sell really fast, even at high prices. If it's a record a lot of people really want at anything like a reasonable price, someone is going to buy it—recession or not.

Even staple like Black Flag and Dead Kennedys vinyl don't stick in the used bin for long. A lot of people are still into these bands and are happy to buy them on vinyl as long as the price is reasonable. And most importantly, rare records are not going to go down much in value—if at all. The most expensive records are not the hipster black metal picture discs from last year, they are the artifacts of the heroic era of hardcore from 1980 to 1984, or the heyday of punk from 1976 to 1980. The crucial records of this era are still, and will forever be crucial. Their popularity has exploded in the internet era—not solely because they are fetishised for their rarity and value, but because this music was bangin' and will forever rage. "Pay to Cum" and "Can't Tell No One" are not headed for the dollar bin, they are headed for art gallery walls and auction houses.

Take a look at '60s garage and psych records and posters if you want a glimpse of the future of early '80s hardcore and KBD punk. Most collectible records from the late '70s and early '80s will stay expensive and continue to rise in price over time. Most diehard collectors problems is not the relative price of the record, it's being able to find a copy in good condition, period. Fairly priced records of this genre will always sell. I can guarantee there are still hundreds of collectors with money in the bank waiting to scoop up any underpriced gems that surface during any coming wave of forced selling.

When people sell records out of their collections, they tend to pick out the least essential items first. Splits, comps, records that were only listened to once, etc. This is why I speculate that the vinyl bubble of the last few years is somewhat real. However, a lot of really good records were made in the early '00s as well, and many of them in very small pressings. It will take years for the output of the last five years to be sorted out by fans and collectors, as there was literally too much at once for almost anyone to take in. Chances are a lot of records/bands people slept on are going to be a big deal ten or twenty years from now. I joked before about "Killed by '00s Hardcore" comps, but such a thing is somewhat inevitable. A "bursting bubble" might shake loose a lot of stuff that people didn't even notice the first time around, which will gain new fans and build in popularity over time. It will also ruthlessly weed out the false, phony and faddish.

To use the housing bubble analogy: a charming, well-built house with architectural detail and character that's in a good location (like a popular, well-established neighborhood near amenities) hasn't lost much value. In fact, if such a house were to go on the market even a little below the average price for the area, someone would probably scoop it up, because it remains something of value. The houses that are losing value are the cheap spec homes in outer-ring suburbs, and trashy houses in neighborhoods no one really cares about, that were "flipped" onto new buyers. These houses never fit into a "sense of place" or had the charm and details a nice home in a nice neighborhood does. It's the same with records—really good records will find new homes quickly and keep their value.

There has been and always will be a lot of "churn" in the used record scene. People weed unwanted records from their collections, drop out of punk, move, die, go to jail, etc. Records are always coming across the counter of the used record store. Hard economic times might speed up this churn, and lead to a lot of marginal records with little staying power finding their way onto the used market. But this will only accelerate an ongoing process that has been underway since record collecting started in the '30s. However, the core of diehard collectors is still with us, and will be waiting to snatch up any underpriced ragers that pop up. I for one am crossing my fingers that the Kaare Og Partiet, Vicious Visions or Wannskraek 7"s have somehow been caught up in this bubble so I can finally get copies for my collection. And if/when they do pop up, I'll buy them. Even if I have to sell all of my black metal hipster remix picture discs and foil-stamped issues of X Force to do it.

One thing that I've commented on before is the bizarre rise in price of really marginal third tier hardcore records from the '80s. Ken Sanderson has advanced the theory that people were busy buying top tier items in the '80s and '90s and now are filling in the gaps with the very obscure and unknown hardcore records from the margins of the scene. Some of these have skyrocketed to prices far outweighing their merits. I've commented on the absurdity of things like $100 Tales of Terror and Russian Meatsquats LPs. I think some of these records are for sure going to drop in value as collectors realize there is a reason why they skipped them when they had the chance to buy them new in '84. They just aren't too good.

However, it's hard to say how much future generations may grow to appreciate Unseen Force, Power of the Spoken Word, Personality Crisis, or any number of other hardcore records that haven't gotten a lot of attention until recently, and that collectors are recognizing to be pretty good. And some of this really marginal stuff is still very hard to find. I'm still looking for the Disappointed Parents and Aryan Disgrace 7"s, for example, and the record bubble doesn't seem to show signs of turning up more copies of either.

Steinhardt's *Razorcake* article is definitely a good read, but a closer look at hardcore punk records shows that the bubble theory only holds up for one segment of a very large and complex scene. Either way, good work Joseph.

AL
QUINT
FUCK
YOU

Catching up on the review pile...

Well, a little bit, anyway. This month, it's all music reviews, starting off with another book to add to the growing number of archival treatments of hardcore. *Radio Silence: A Selected Visual History Of American Hardcore Music,* compiled by Nathan Nedorostek and Anthony Pappalardo (ex-Ten Yard Fight/In My Eyes guitarist), approaches hardcore with more of a visual emphasis, in case the title didn't tip you off!

The images have catalogue numbers for each "artifact," like in a book you'd get from an art exhibit. But those items alone can't provide a complete presentation of US hardcore punk throughout the '80s and '90s, in its different incarnations and dispersal into various permutations—that comes from reflections from the participants, and the photography that accompanies the ephemera that has "survived."

Blessed be the pack rats, so Anthony and Nathan could, for instance, borrow my original Siege demo and hand-written lyric sheet that one of the guys had given me before it was even officially released. And I'm grateful to have gotten it back in the same condition, or this book might have been a posthumous effort from those two!

The leather jacket with hand-painted logos that hangs on the front cover is nothing by itself—it has to be filled in by a human, breathing entity, and the photographs that follow manage to present it in at least a two-dimensional form. The stories flesh it out further, although, as I've said, that's more of a sidebar than in the "oral history" type books of this genre. And they've collected an impressive array of stuff: original layouts for milestone records like Minor Threat's *Salad Days*, personal letters, t-shirts and records. Not flyers, though, but that's been covered more extensively in other books, anyway.

A lot of ground is covered: the birth of independent punk itself in the LA and SF scenes, its early-'80s origins—with the DC bands, of course—Boston, NYC, LA, the nexus of skating and hardcore, the introduction of graffiti style, and the late-'80s sXe eruption. It goes in different directions in the '90s, such as with the more chaotic-sounding hardcore created by bands on the Gravity label—for whom the visual packaging was just as important as the music inside.

There's a gallery of records and t-shirts that show similarities in design through the use of certain icons—such as the American flag, which is used for more of a patriotic purpose on an Agnostic Front record—but the flag-covered coffins on Hüsker Dü's *Land Speed Record* and Born Against's *Nine Patriotic Hymns For Children* cover show how it can make a not-so-subtle political statement in the former case and an ironic one in the latter.

Designer/artist/filmmaker Mark Owens has an interesting segment, "On To Greener Pastures," about Dischord's evolution from the simplicity of block, rub-on letters to the transitional *Salad Days* cover that didn't follow any sort of obvious hardcore blueprint. This is a combination of coffee table book (although not really big enough to fit that description) and written history, with a good ratio of each—and it does a pretty decent job covering the subject matter.

From the visual to the aural

First up is a pair of 7" releases from Feral Kid (29 Custer St., Buffalo, NY 14214, www.myspace.com/feralkidrecords). The title of BROWN SUGAR's *Deportation* EP is in reference to their vocalist Eddie's "undocumented" status—but that's the only song with any sort of mention of the immigration issue. The balance of the time, it's the laundry list of complaints against conformity, big mouths and the like. Energetic hardcore with a few west coast elements; basically, it's loud and catchy (well, my definition of catchy) rough-hewn fodder.

RATIONAL ANIMALS' *Perception Becomes Reality* is a musical mental breakdown announcement, with guitars. If I may be so bold to make a half-Clash reference: "Know Your Rights" Look it up. Creating a Flag-ish tumult to muck up your senses. Actually, I make the reference to the four-bar boys due mainly to the guitar slash, but there's a similar darkness, a lurking danger. Howling vocals on the edge of sanity and a shattering sound to give ya nightmares.

Soulrebel Records (www.myspace.com/xsoulrebelrecordsx) has released two new 12" discs, one of 'em a comp called *The Right To Assemble: Volume 2,* and the other a one-sided record from SEASICK, *Ouroboros*. Interestingly, there's another recently released record with this title—the newest Germ Attak LP. Seasick's record has a symbol of a snake swallowing its own tail—an endless circle? People doomed to repeat the same mistakes over and over? I don't know crud about Greek mythology (its origin, apparently), but there's some heady, near-intellectualized lyrical matter here that covers issues of religion, economic division and even those who wish to separate the political from the punk, to simplify things a bit.

It starts with a tribal intro called "Fallacies" that gradually builds up before careening into the speed bomb of "Leviathan." The double-speed hammer assault for "Collapse" isn't quite as effective, but that's only a brief misstep (and not even a major one) for this band's dramatic, energetic hardcore sound. There's a '90s-era vibe for me, in terms of pairing musical intensity with esoteric lyricism, but this is furious, in your face stuff, concluding with a lurching emanation about the "human anguish, pain and evil" brought on by religion.

The comp, centered around the "Hub City" of New Brunswick, NJ, has 21 songs plus a spoken intro about "unity" and "diversity" from a self-described Puerto Rican homosexual skinhead named Pedro Angel Serrano—from New Brunswick, NJ, aka the Hub City. There is musical diversity here and a variance in quality, but I think the common thread is passion, a sense of community—even with the accusations of being "too cliquey" or "too PC," according to Craig from Degenerics/ Kami kaze/Soulrebel.

Truth be told, I think that happens in just about every town—certainly in Boston, where there are even factions in the DIY "community." In any case, there doesn't seem to be any sense of going through the motions with these bands. All the songs are unreleased and feature some of the better material I've heard from the ERGS and ENSIGN, for instance. The latter seem to have found their inner roughness, again.

New music from the hard-hitting DEGENERICS is always something to be happy about, and that's followed with an equally intense song from SEASICK. THE HUNCHBACK's "Creepshow" fuses surfy punk with a near-MINUTEMEN flavor. Not as compelling are the more melodic stylings of SCREAM HELLO and ROCK, STAR. Very few comps are going to satisfy everyone, but there wasn't that much that made me want to move the needle.

Kenny Leek used to growl 'n scream for the underrated NEIGHBORS, and his newish San Diego band, TITANARUM, have a similarly fast, unfettered hardcore attack on their *Spastis Progressivus Aggressiorum* EP (www.titana rum.net). Truth be told, there's a little more metal molt/damage in the guitar lines and jerkin' tempo shifts. Along with the music, Kenny's lyrics show a man unwilling to tone it down, as it says on "Aging Quickly"—and that's both musically and in the way he approaches his life—pessimistic, angry, doubtful, questioning, but also maintaining a defiant individualism, a "muckhead," as he calls himself. Shit, did this guy just attend the same high school reunion I did? So what's the coping mechanism? This music, of course—"the spastic bands that I get to play in / that's why I live life." The music keeps him going. Same here.

Another compilation, this one a double LP, comes from Lawless Records (PO Box 689, Hingham, MA 02043, elaw@fieldfabrics.com) and it's *A TRIBUTE TO UNNATURAL AXE—RULING THE WORLD FROM THE BACK SEAT*. If you need a history lesson, the Axe was one of the early Boston punk bands, and their opening salvo was a mega-collectible debut 7" that featured the classic "They Saved Hitler's Brain" and three other rippers. Snarly, snotty, nasty stuff. So Eric Law and the Axe's vocalist Richie Parsons have put together a 27-song (plus intro by Rev. Nørb) tribute with bands from around the globe.

I'm not a big fan of tribute albums for the most part, and not everything here is particularly mesmerizing, but there are some ravaging interpretations. Since the Axe's oeuvre wasn't that vast, there are some repeats—four takes on "Summertime," four "Hitler's Brains," three versions of "The Creeper" and a couple of "The Man I Don't Wanna Be"—a later, more melodic/introspective song. Unfortunately, those takes aren't particularly good—one's done by THE NEIGHBORHOODS, who used to be the best live band in Boston ca. '80, but these days sound like a lethargic bar band. Ditto for CLASSIC RUINS' rendition. They're another vintage Boston band that had their moments but, once again, sound too much like bar rock.

Enough negativity. There are other local bands that have come out of retirement or semi-retirement for the occasion. MISSION OF BURMA has actually been back for several years and they capture the seething nature of "The Creeper." STRANGLEHOLD bash their way through "Big Noise," and JERRY'S KIDS rock out for "Bombing & Burying." It's the younger bands (in relative terms) that really breathe life into the songs, though. There are super-raw takes on "Hitler's Brain" by Italian bands DICK DASTARDLY and UFO DICTATORZ, and Germans DEMOLITION GIRL. JOHNNY & THE REFORMS add a childish/garage bash for "Summertime." THE MONGROLLS' "3 Chord Rock" (another early Axe fave) has plenty of rawness, which is bound to happen when you do it on a four-track in your practice space, as they did. There are only 500 of these suckas so you might not want to dawdle.

VITAMIN X is back with their first full-length album, *Full Scale Assault* (Tankcrimes, PO Box 3495, Oakland, CA 94609, www.tankcrimes.com) since 2004's *Bad Trip,* and, even if it's a cliché to use the expression, this LP really is the best one they've done to date. It was recorded by Steve Albini in Chicago, and there's a boldness and richness in the mix. There's also a guest appearance by Negative Approach's John Brannon, who lends his tortured tonsils on a couple of songs.

The speed and pure aggression remain, but there seems to be a slightly more prominent rock 'n roll flavor here, especially in Mark's hot guitar licks and willingness to "borrow" a bit—such as the "Detroit Rock City" quotation for "Deal With It." "Whatcha Gonna Do" mixes some "whoahs" into a driving rock sound. "Time Has Come" favors a crossover tinge. The LP marks the recorded debut of their new drummer Wolfi (also from THE TANGLED LINES), and he provides a hard-hitting anchor to the sound.

Kudos must be given to the lavish packaging, as well—a gatefold sleeve featuring colorful artwork from John Dyer Baizley of Baroness, a poster, colored vinyl, cardboard inner sleeve, the works. It's almost as cool as the gatefold for the first BAD COMPANY album. OK, not really... I mean, how could it be? As for the contents inside, they're quite cool, or, more accurately, pulverizing. It's available on CD but you really need the vinyl here.

Also from Holland (like Vitamin X) are two ravenous bands, WAKING THE DEAD and THE SHINING, and they've teamed up for a split 12" called *Thrash Attack* (Dead Area/Pick Up, www.skateordiemotherfucker.nl/wakingthedead.html and www.myspace.com/ theshiningtrash). Let's start with The Shining—I would have said thrash attack even if I hadn't seen the title. Looking at the band photos, I see a bandana, I see a denim vest with some patches and pins and, as expected, they play in a crossover vein. That's something they've been moving towards since their first EP, and this more or less completes the transition.

A streamlined, speedy sound with crisp execution and some hot guitar riffs 'n licks. Covering the ACCÜSED's "Slow Death" endears them to me, as well. This is definitely from the hardcore side of the street but, really, the lines were blurred (much to some HC purists' dismay). But I never had any problem with it.

Waking The Dead does something stylistically similar although it sounds a tad more metal to my ears. They're also not quite as instrumentally-adept as the Shining, but keep it convincingly energetic. Bonus points for the purloined EXODUS stage banter.

Macedonian hardcore stalwarts FxPxOx are back with 12"/CD *Ne/Znaes/Sto/E/Toa/Covek* (Third Party, LP/Junk Cola CD, www.thirdxparty.com or surovo@yahoo.com), and experience works in their favor since this is killer stuff. While the velocity remains, there's not as much of the warpblast, and things are kept musically interesting within the band's hard-edged framework.

There's a tough rock n roll quality to "Do You See, Do You Hear?" and "We're Not In '17/'77/'99" (both are English translations), while "It's Other's Fault" bounces back and forth between medium speed and "Seein' Red"-inspired thrash. FxPxOx appears to be done, but Vasko from that band now plays in SMARTxBOMB (www.myspace.com/ smartx bomb) and their four-song CD demo is a fairly good start—although they could work on their tightness a bit—basic, stripped-down old school hardcore.

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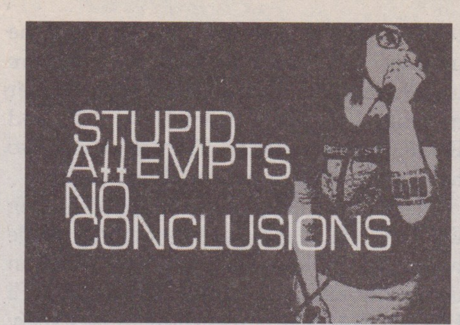


I told myself that I would find a place to live for a little while this past November as a gift to myself for turning 25. I chose Barcelona, which seems glamorous *and* punk. I'd been there before—I flew there for ten days in early 2007, when I was spending a few months in Dublin. Ireland was good. It was okay, kids were real nice and we had this stupid band going that was asked to play a 17-year-old's *Saved by the Bell* party. That was cool, but everything was small, damp, dank, and expensive.

Barcelona, in comparison, was so warm and dry and so free. I was put up in an old squatted linen factory, beer was a cold 60 euro cents for a bottle at the bodega across the road, and I was staying with Americans who'd make me stovetop espresso after stovetop espresso while sounding off on their ideas for a Unabomber-themed hip hop project they were recording. I think it was called THE POWER PROCESS. I'm pretty sure they were calling their album *Surrogate Activities*.

For those unfamiliar with the *Unabomber Manifesto*, basically, the power process refers to what Ted Kaczynski believed was the basic human drive to have goals, to have these goals require a certain amount of effort, and for these goals to be somewhat attainable. Important for some is for this process to be reasonably autonomous. The lack of these things, imputed to modern industrial society, results in demoralization—or whatever, you know, middle class vacuity. This leads to us pursuing a surrogate activity, or, an "artificial goal that people set up for themselves merely in order to have some goal to work toward." (paragraph 39)

I had timed this '07 Barcelona visit around a FUCKED UP show, right around the *Hidden World* LP hype-era. It was fairly glorious. "We love you, Barcelona," they said as a massive enthusiastic crowd climbed all over each other. "Me, too," I thought.

"Maybe I'll move here," I said the next day, on the rooftop terrace of the linen factory squat—a beautiful four-story oblong building no one paid money to live in. I was looking over a palm-treed, green-mountained skyline: 21 degrees in January (Americans: sorry, 70 degrees).

I heard that in Pittsburg, these punks encourage other punks to move there by offering them a bike and setting them up on two blind dates. When I tried to move to Barcelona, it felt like the punk house you're told is way cool to stay at, when you stop by, it's totally the wrong time. Like they won't make you sleep outside or anything, but they are kind of bummed; they've been having a lot of house guests lately, a bunch of shitty ones, it's been a strain on the house, there's some tension.

When I showed up there, all my friends were gone, all the squats were overcrowded and stressed out—and for reasons too complicated for anyone to ever translate into English for me. Every show coming up during my short stay was cancelled. Plus, I didn't know what I'd do there. I needed some goals. Squat eviction was a big problem, but I am bad at fighting cops.

Maybe I'd learn Spanish and be able to finally read LOS CRUDOS lyrics. I really wanted to research Spanish punk, but when I tried to move into the empty room in the apartment of the dude rumored to have the biggest record collection in Barcelona, an Italian industrial design student usurped the room.

Then I accidentally moved in with some racists in the suburbs. I avoided their shitty comments by staying in my new bedroom with the window opening into a tiny courtyard that every kitchen in the building opened up into, every day waking up to the grumpy morning routines of five other families. This pushed me towards my decision to skip out on rent and to go to Paris and learn to play the keyboard in order to join an old roommate's band—this indie pop unit—a nine-person, group-singing, weird instruments combo that needed some lead melody reinforcement due to an accordion player and a keyboardist having mental breakdowns and quitting the tour.

I think someone from that punks-playing-old-timey band PINE HILL HAINTS once likened being on tour to being in heaven, in that you never grow old and you always see your friends.

I said in a previous column that touring is an easy way to absolve yourself of the depressing responsibility of finding meaningful ways to occupy your time. So I caught a rideshare to Paris and sussed out my new situation. I was now spending my days and nights (the tour had some downtime due to a cancelled UK portion of tour: the usual immigration problems) in what the band was calling The Eggshell Apartment, a small flat with a big living room where we'd sleep in an adorable summer camp-esque row.

The two bedrooms off the living room belonged, respectively, to one of the dropout band members and her roommate that liked personal space and hated houseguests. Outside was snowing and overpriced. Oh well. I sat in a corner, sharpied the notes onto the keys of a Casio, plugged in some headphones, and practiced the parts I needed to play onstage, thereby qualifying me for transport and feeding on the band bill.

I tried to seem quiet, non-intrusive, and invisible when the previous keyboard player made the trip from her room to the kitchen. Maybe it was a little like Barcelona, but at least I had activities, and eventually I'd move back into a van that I knew would never leave without me.

When the indie pop tour brought me to Lyon, France, I went to go visit my friend Alex, whose band PIZZA O.D. had toured with my other band, the Canadian punk one, just a month earlier. I didn't invite him to the show because I knew he would hate it, but I wanted to see him, so I stopped by. He told me that he was asked to book another comprehensive European tour, like the one we had just done, this time for some New Zealanders, but that he wasn't sure he wanted to do it. Why?

"It was just so much work; months and months of stress and booking. And touring is such an easy, non-challenging way to travel. Plus," he said, referring to the tour we'd just done, "if I had written what I thought would happen at each show before it happened, it would've been completely accurate."

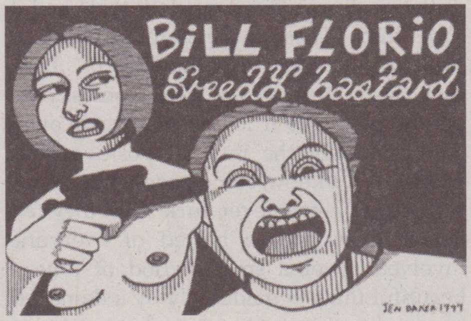
I wasn't offended. Okay, maybe I was a little offended, but I tried not to be. But I disagreed too. I guess for the Canadian contingent, having no frame of reference for what the actual, run-of-the-mill basement squat scene in most of Europe is like, everything was pretty new for us. We couldn't have predicated how even the usual played-out cities like Paris would go—much less, say, Slovenia. Plus Alex and I, who had become penpals via his fanzine *Ratcharge*, had decided to do that tour before ever meeting each other.

Like we met up at an anarchist radio station in Paris, interviewed each other on air, introduced our bands, and went to eleven different countries in 30 days—and it going swimmingly is one of the reasons that I'm (and please excuse my boring cliché rehashes of punk enchantment) still stoked on punk. Or, after touring with a completely not-punk band, I should say, rather than punk (although varieties within this genre are still my usual jams of choice), the underground realm of DIY organizing and networking.

But, sure, I can see where he is coming from. I probably I could do the same predictions with a Canadian tour, maybe even American. But still, even retracing a small portion of Western Europe again, the same cities, it was pretty fucking different from when I did it six weeks earlier. Guys, indie pop tour world is weird. It's a chaotic experience of always free alcohol, but not always the guaranteed food and lodging I had thought was universally characteristic of touring Europe: one of not having a hired driver and only the drunkest member of us being able to drive, one of mandatory, hour-long sound checks, one of weird French clubs in Berlin that we can't play drums in, with furniture nailed to the ceiling. A whole living room set on the ceiling. You can't make that shit up. Safe travelling, sure, but still weird. As in, I played a Casio in front of a hipster audience and got to tour again instead of trying to figure what else I could do. As in, I guess I had a goal, and I guess I attained it, and I had to exercise my own power to do so. As in, I've staved off demoralization for another month. I think.

Stay punk.

julsgeneric@hotmail.com



I was going over the genetic cesspool that makes up the different personalities in my lineage yesterday, and I decided that my major character flaw, limitation, deficiency or best feature—depending on how it may affect you at any given time—is that I seem to use guilt as my major defense mechanism. It's definitely part of my upbringing, and probably not so much of my wiring. Thanks Mom and Dad!

Guilt is like fire or ice or a great big belt sander. It's damn useful—assuming it's not applied to sensitive body parts over long periods of time. The other drawback is that having it around you all the time fucks with the room temperature or makes a lot of noise inside your head.

I want to say, for the record, if I do guilt someone into or out of something, it's not something I do consciously, or by default. It just happens to be what kicks in when I'm given extreme choices. Other people like to scream and yell, create all this passive-aggressive drama, shit in your mailbox. But I like to just say it as it is, and let you feel bad on your own.

Anyhow I didn't write this to give you some psychoanalysis of myself. I was going to give you some funny examples, and maybe you'll either say, "Hey I've done that shit too" or "Hey, now I understand why I hate Bill. Instead of calling me a scumbag, he made me feel like one, and it happened to stick."

Also, I've come to the realization that not only can I not control how I fuck with the population at large, I've accepted and embraced it, and seem to have many experts backing me as the way to pave a better future. Hey, it worked for Nathaniel Hawthorne— oh wait, ok screw you then.

Now I'm not doing an advertisement or anything, but I have read a few books lately that seem to sugar coat guilt into something that can eventually save the world. That is, I've been reading a lot of books about the prison system, as well as a lot of psychology of the workplace type stuff—since I now work with human beings instead of Bridezillas. (Hmm I'm trying to come up with the Jewish equivalent of a soccer mom, but I can't think of a Jewish sport. Let's call 'em tennis moms with soccer nannies.)

So, in prison and at a workplace there are two ways to run things and make them somewhat functional. The old way is more like the prison way. You have a time clock, you have rules posted, you have job descriptions that people use for and against you, "I (you) can't do that, it's not part of my (your) job." There are set working hours and there is a strictly enforced pecking order.

You don't need to use guilt to fire someone or have their privileges taken away—or to lock them in the isolation cell. Sure, this works to some degree, but it creates resentment and negativity: people steal supplies, slack off, and try whatever they can to get around the system they have been forced into. I like to think of internal affairs in the NYPD—constantly trying to set up cops to do the wrong thing and get them fired or disciplined.

The other method is what I've decided to call the open confessional booth, which is the way I've sort of done things all along. You give everyone as much responsibility as they can handle, and you trust them with those responsibilities. You let them know, "Hey, if this gets fucked up, you ruin everything for everyone." Actually, you, you never say that, you just make sure it's understood. So, instead of "You have to work overtime this week, we're not hitting our goal." It reads like, "I'm going to work all weekend so we can meet our goal…(what are you doing?)"

Now, as long as whatever you're doing seems like a worthwhile job—as in "We need to do what we can to stay in business so the 5,000 employees we support don't get laid off," or "I work at a homeless shelter and poor people will be turned away hungry"—guilt works in everyone's favor. And as long as you're not a person who gets overcome with it and you can feel satisfied that you did your best, everyone's happy.

So basically this works for most normal, decently adjusted people. How can you be a bad guy when what you're saying makes total sense? "Hey, we all need to pitch in here so we can all be happy about what we did in the end and not let the dog shit all over the carpet while everyone's eating Christmas dinner." It doesn't work when it comes into contact with fucked up people.

I know Europeans (and people without any sense of humor or context about anything) like to call me "that straight-edge columnist," but here I'm going to bring up people with those types of substance problems only because they're the easiest ones to figure out in this situation—and because the people who are chemically controlled and still super fucked up need complicated, long stories as an excuse to behave like animals.

So, let's say you started using dope in your mid-teens, but cleaned yourself up sometime down the line and are now "a reformed addict." This is where the whole confessional booth approach backfires. I have to have a heart here, and if I had used speed or heroin or massive amounts of coke for years, even sober, the thought of opening up the door of a confessional booth would terrify me.

Wait, "I've spent years scamming people for money—doing unthinkable things under the influence—and in the pursuit of being under the influence, that the nice guy I feel I now am still always smells of that moldy skeleton in my back pocket. Oh, let me bear my soul!" You start a job, or you start playing second ukulele in a band I'm in. Now you've built up enough self-confidence to stay sober, you've built up enough to make real friends, but I think the hardest thing to shake is that you now are an important part of the societal make-up.

You're no longer scamming people for money or sex or drugs. They're giving you responsibilities—and a lot of the time the only consequences of blowing it is hurting other people's sense of inner guilt. You have no need to lie about anything anymore, but realizing that people actually like you and aren't trying to get one over on you isn't something you can get back. It's like reversing virginity.

So, you spent all those years working your own inner guilt, doing everything you could to spike it, drink it or snort it all out of you so you wouldn't have to think about it. How the fuck are you going to care about someone else who has sleepless nights because the store shelves aren't fully stocked—and that dude looking for a Husker Du record who won't find it in the 'H' box until next week? How are you going to care about that guy with a record missing from his collection when you spent so long only fending for yourself and only looking out for others when there was something in it for you?

The guilt works with me for a time. Since this type of person is bored very easily, they have no problem being given responsibilities at first, and will probably take it to an extreme. "Hey where the fuck were you? I just put twenty hours into this project, let's get moving!" But then after a while they lose momentum and get bored, and that positive guilt instilled turns ugly. Suddenly whatever they originally committed to internally starts being projected.

Before, it was "I wanna do it too!" and it turns into, "These fuckers are all trying to ruin my life with their band (job)." Then they easily turn around the confessional booth and make it a prison of their own. And suddenly the internal positive guilt (Yeah yeah, I know, some people like to call this "drive"—whatever, fuck 'em.) they felt before turns into a hatred of everyone involved. Over a small period of time a beautiful thing is made ugly by a damaged personality. Time to get back to AA my friend.

It's funny when you think of the people who hang around the punk scene. I think they're in either one extreme or the other—unless you're like me and try to goof on both and have a good time with it. You have the ultra-concerned folks who second-guess every decision they make, with this week's reason for feeling guilty, and who try to look out for every poor bastard on earth. "Is it right to have a show in a bar when some poor kid too stupid to get a fake ID may not be able to ever see these exact bands in this exact order for another year of two?!" "Did they make coffee filters out of rat fur and use it to make this tea I'm drinking? Those poor rats!"

And on the other extreme you've got the guy who'd sit there for an hour steaming the green duct tape off a seven inch he stole from MRR to get $12 on eBay, who wipes his ass with someone's toothbrush on the way out. The guy who dives off the balcony feet first with steel toed boots into the soundman's head. These people can easily be (and usually are) in the same bands, working on the same zines, putting together the same shows.

I think it just gives even more credit to the abilities a lot of us have, and how much more intensity and drive everything we do requires. I think when any of us have to deal with the boring normal people, it's easy stuff—just don't feel too guilty about it.

Hey write me! bill@candids.com

Allan McNaughton

I'm miserable cunt, get me out of here…

Greetings gentle readers! This issue's column finds me writing to you once again from the snow-covered landscape (or slush-drenched high streets) of the West of Scotland. I am here to meet my new niece for the first time and to celebrate the felicitous occasion of her Christening. It's been wonderful to spend time in the bosom of my brother's home, but the rest of the trip has been something of a downer.

Living in America (as I have done for almost fourteen years at this point) I am somewhat sheltered from the day-to-day grimness of life around here. I have only my fondly treasured memories. Frequent pangs of homesickness cause me to consider a move back, especially as family becomes increasingly important to me. When I was younger I couldn't fucking wait to get away from where I grew up. Now there are times when I think I should return to be around my family more. There are children to consider, not to mention ageing parents. My dad is actually in the hospital as I write.

The more time I spend here, however, the more I know I'm doing the right thing. Walking down the street, all the faces I see, young, old, and in-between, are frozen in masks of bitter misery. It's easy to see why: a week into my trip I feel myself sinking into an overcast mood. Maybe it's the weather—it's minus four today. I try and staunch the flow of melancholy with chips and curry sauce and Irn Bru and Pot Noodles and Stella Artois—which work temporarily, but take a physical toll, sending my ordinarily robust and healthy Californian constitution into shock.

The state of the economy is no doubt contributing to the nation's general malaise, especially since just about everything that is purchased here is done so on credit. In fact, what is discussed in the United States as the 'economic meltdown' or the 'financial crisis' has a snappy, tabloid-ready name here: the Credit Crunch. It's become convenient to blame the credit crunch for anything negative that happens, much in the way that any unseasonable weather at all is attributed to global warming. Your job is letting you go? Credit crunch. Your landlord's raising your rent? Credit crunch. But KLM losing your luggage in Amsterdam? Come on, I'm not letting you have that one.

It's become all anyone can talk about, almost. A typical exchange will follow this prescribed format: "Credit Crunch" "I'm A Celebrity" "Credit Crunch" "Posh n Becks" "Credit Crunch" "Pedo Sex Beasts" "Credit Crunch" "X Factor" ad nauseam.

A conversation with my friend Jer (who has appeared in this column in other occasions) helped to confirm that I'm not alone in my feelings. We talked about how much work and energy is involved in not accepting the default setting of life here.

If you're not careful, if you're not actively carving out a space where joy and freedom can exist, feelings of dour negativity can take over. When the only amusement comes at other peoples' expense, and the only time people demonstrate any true feelings is when they're drunk, you have to find some other way if you don't want to lose your mind.

Ach, it's not all doom and gloom. The Christmas season is bringing out the miseryguts in me. I don't mean to be so negative. It's actually not that bad here really. Plenty of people have got great stuff going on. I spent a pleasant day in Glasgow today. I haven't spent long enough here to really sink my teeth into all the exciting stuff happening here lately, especially the music. Over the last couple of weeks I've had to pass up several amazing gigs. I've also managed to let down more than a few old friends. I did manage to squeeze in the BMX in Scotland Awards and a bit of record shopping. I scored a few singles in the cheapo bin that will probably find their way into my DJ box but will hold little to no interest to readers of this magazine. That's OK; I am content to not be cool. I'll take my Gary Numan and Slade records and go home.

I think that's all I've got for you this month. By the time this gets to you we'll be well into 2009, which will hopefully be a better year than 2008 or 2007. They were both shit, at least for a lot of people around me. It's hard to be hopeful but what else is there?

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George Tabb sez
Take my life, please!

So there I was, at Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York City, some years back. My mom—who was hooked up to every machine ever made—had just finished telling me she wasn't sure who I was, and asked if I knew her sister, Joan.

I tried telling her I was her son, but she didn't believe me. She didn't remember she had a son. And then suddenly, her breathing got real deep, nurses rushed in, and the next thing I knew my mom was in a coma.

While this was happening, I kept concentrating on the game I was playing on my Nintendo Gameboy. I wanted to be anyplace else but here, at a cancer hospital, with my mom dying in front of me.

A few months earlier, my mom had purchased the Gameboy for me because she noticed that while I was at the hospital with her, I was just too nervous. The game system made things much easier—and took me places I wanted to be, like Dracula's castle, or Mario's city, or even in the woods as a little elf—anyone or thing but a guy with his mother slowly dying of lung cancer.

Twelve hours after my mom went into that coma she died. That was years ago. But I still have that Gameboy, and still love games more than ever. In fact, I'm having major surgery next month, and have some games I'm playing to help pass the time when I get out from under the knife. Video games are important forms of escape and entertainment. Just like The Punk Rock.

In fact, I'd go as far as to say that some video games are more "punk rock" than punk rock is these days. They have more of an edge, are more artistically unique, and have some really cool people working on them. The truth is, I know a lot of punk rock artists who are now in video game design and have found fewer rules in it than the three chords the Ramones invented.

So, with all that in mind, may I present to you, my first annual Video Game Round-Up/Gift Guide for *Maximumrocknroll.* Below are some games you may wanna check out. Some abbreviations you may need to below are: DS equals Nintendo Double Screen (the new Gameboy). XBOX360 is Microsoft's new gaming console for your television. PST is the new one from Sony. Wii is the new console from Nintendo that works by pointing and clicking at your television. Lots of fun. Anyway, here are some games you may want to consider getting for yourself, or loved ones, or just buddies for the holiday season!

Call Of Duty: World At War is the new *Call Of Duty* game from Activision. It's out on all systems, but best for the XBOX360, because the multiplayer is the best, and you can talk to and kill your friends from all over the world. The game is World War II-based, and no game except the last *Call Of Duty* has ever looked so real and so good. And felt that way. It's a true piece of realism, and more fun than a barrel of Sid Viciouses!

The same goes for *Gears Of War 2* from Epic—same system, same reason. This game takes place in the future, when giant locusts invade earth and you have to kill them any way you can—including chainsaws on your guns. Awesome, and very bloody. Not for the little ones.

The new *Mortal Kombat v. DC Comics,* from Midway, is just plain great for kids of all ages. In a twist, the *Mortal Kombat* fighting game took away a lot of the blood and gore, and added even cooler moves, with Wonder Woman, Batman, Superman, and even Catwoman. Man, the tail on that babe!!! My nephews love it. I love it. Your whole family can play it—and it proves that a game can be good without the gore.

Rock Band 2 and *Guitar Hero: World Tour* are two fantastic rock games with fake guitars, drums, etc. While it's not real, and you really aren't in a band, it's sure a lot of fun to play in your living room, hitting those buttons and being told "YOU ROCK" in huge letters! Both games are lots of fun. And the truth is, the better a musician you are, the harder these games are, because they are based on a video game system, not real music. These games are great for parties, or just kicking people in your family's asses. And one of the games even has a re-recording of a Sex Pistols song from the band itself. How amazing is that?

Lego Batman is great on the DS. I'm at 87 percent as I write this, and just started it on the XBOX360. You play as anyone in the Batman universe, Lego style, and it is nothing short of wonderful. When you kill bad guys, they break up like Legos. Punk Rock! And Fun! Before this there was *Lego Star*

Wars and *Lego Indiana Jones*. If you have to go with two out of three, go with *Star Wars* and *Batman*. Just one? I'd say *Batman*. It rocks! And really takes hours and hours to completely finish.

Time Hollow is an interesting and pretty great DS game from Japan. It's more of a point and click game, where you go back in time to solve mysteries—like the murder of your parents! Whoa! I've never played a game like this, and can't wait to play more. Check this one out. It has lots of reading in it, and puzzle solving too. So it will really make you think.

Speaking of thinking, while playing *NHL '09* from EA, you don't really need to think all that much, just hit that puck in the goal with the new system of holding the joystick back and slamming it into a slapshot. This is an *amazing* hockey game. And I never really liked hockey. Until I toured Canaduh with DOA and they turned me on to it, along with blue-bottled beer, and welfare Wednesdays!

Skate It for The Wii is a game that is almost great. It's fun to use the Wii remote as a virtual skateboard, but they say you can use the Wii Board for that as well. Bullshit. It doesn't work. But nice try. Go with the XBOX360 version of this game and you won't be sorry. Same with the DS version.

Saint's Row 2 is a *Grand Theft Auto* rip off, and a guilty pleasure. The characters are totally dumb, and the whole game is way too violent and stupid for any positive social change. That being said, it's very fun in a very sick sort of way. No kids should play this, and adults should realize this is *satire*. Like The Angry Samoans' "Fear," or to a much dumber degree, The Dead Kennedys. I'd be okay if this game was never made, but since it was, it is good looking and fun. Just kinda way mean.

Last, but not least, I'd like to point everyone toward *Spiderman: Web of Shadows*, for all the systems from Activision. This game is absurdly good, and has gotten horrible reviews because people are just really stupid. The graphics are great, you get to fight all the Spiderman bad guys, and Venom is awesome in this title. The DS version is a bit different—more of a "Metroid meets Castlevania" thingy—and it's all good. For once, the web-shooting is tight, and you don't stick to everything. Best Spiderman game to date, and that's saying a lot.

So yeah, check out some of these games for the holidays. You won't be sorry. They'll take you to new worlds you've never visited, and you'll experience new ideas and art. And isn't that what Punk Rock was all about to begin with?

Take My Life, Please.

assimilate
my
purse
mattilda, a.k.a.
matt bernstein sycamore

Torn to Pieces

Sometimes people ask me if it's the pain that wakes me up. No it's my brain. But then here I am with my shoulders—the place between my shoulders—all of it, like my back, except burning, and there's no comfortable position. I keep switching but not finding. I guess I should get up and take a shower just to soothe my muscles but this time my brain isn't on. I want to stay in that place I don't want to get in the shower and then get up—I mean get up and then get into the shower, which means I've already gotten up. And then I'm up I don't want to be up. And in all this pain.

This is after Feldenkrais. Maybe here the exhaustion is helping me fight the pain, or making it worse. But then eventually I fall back asleep, and when I get up I'm already sad because I can't bring my computer to Baltimore, I mean I can't bring it because it makes my bag too heavy and actually it will hurt too much just to take it out of the case. But mostly what I want to do there is to write, to write right in the moment. But instead I'm already sad.

Before I started my book tour, my mother offered to pay for a hotel in DC—I said I don't need a hotel, I'll find somewhere to stay. But then I thought about it, and realized that by the time I reached DC I would've already stayed in who knows how many houses and apartments with other people, and by then it would be nice to be alone. So I said okay, and then my mother called the hotel I stayed at when I visited my father before he died. And she called me back and said oh, I just can't afford it, which is her classic behavior—to offer me something I don't necessarily want, but then once I want it then there she is, ready to let me down. And then she acts totally powerless, like she'd like to find me a different place but she doesn't even know where to start—this is part of her pattern.

I said whatever, I'll find somewhere to stay. But then she did actually find somewhere else, so now I'm in DC, staying in this hotel which is spacious but cold. The windows face walls of other windows and the thing I like the least is that they start so high up on the wall that you barely realize you're seeing out unless you stand right there and stare at corporate bodies in corporate rooms. No, the thing I like the least is the mold problem—invisible, but you can smell it in the air. But there's a kitchen, and that's the most important thing—I'm by myself and I'm not sure if I like it. I mean at someone else's apartment I wouldn't be able to relax in the same way, to totally let go, which isn't really relaxing, but collapse—and collapse is what I need right now. But it feels awful.

Awful is going with my mother to visit my grandmother Rose in Baltimore. This is because Rose keeps falling, and then she has to go to the hospital for two months. So she says she'd be too stressed out to see me unless my mother comes too—another game is what I'm thinking. I mean maybe she does need someone there, but it doesn't need to be my mother. But she says it needs to be my mother, there isn't another option. So then here I am in this hotel room, already sad that I can't bring my computer.

I haven't eaten anything and my mother's on the phone in a panic because we can't leave after 3:30 p.m. or it will be too dark for her to drive—even though we already said that if it were after 3:30 we'd take the train. She's saying we can't go, it's too late, we can't go. I say we already decided we would take the train, right? Right, she says, we'll take the train. But then she doesn't want to meet me at the hotel even though here someone can bring my bags right to the cab, and then someone right from the cab to the train.

But she says she'll carry my bags. I say, you said that last time, but then they were too heavy. How heavy are they, she says. They're not that heavy this time, I'm not bringing anything heavy, but here at the hotel someone can carry them into the cab. Then she wants to know what time we're leaving.

I say listen, I already told you that I'm in a horrible amount of pain today. I mean I'm having a problem with my back—this is the worst I've felt on the whole tour, I can hardly do anything at all—I can't even imagine how I'm going to do anything. And then we're arguing again, even though I've already told her I need to eat before figuring out the rest of the plans, even though she keeps offering things like groceries, but then she can't get groceries because she doesn't know how to find what I want or how to get from the Whole Foods that's directly across the street from her apartment to where I'm staying. Or extra pots to use in the kitchen.

But then there's so much going on, there's so much going on and I thought you were coming in next week. I forgot you were coming in today. Do you see what I'm saying? She's always letting me down and I always know that, but it always overwhelms me anyway. Eventually she decides she will come to the hotel and I'm thinking I'm going to have to hug her, I mean I don't have to hug her, but I will hug her, and what will that be like? It's in the lobby, and I feel my face in a grimace and I wonder what other people see. She says your hair looks different—is it longer? That color—I haven't seen you in that color—it's different—a solid, orange. I'm guessing different means worse, but she likes my sweater, and then she says oh your skin looks amazing, it really does.

A lot of people think my skin looks amazing. Some people say skin is the outermost sign of health, so maybe I have some sort of health or maybe it's just skin. On the train, my mother wants to make sure I don't tell Rose anything about her or how much the train costs—then she'll think I have all this money. I say it's only 25 dollars, what are you talking about? I know, my mother says, but the Marc train—I know, I say—it's eight dollars, but what difference does it make?

My mother says Rose is always bringing up stories from when I was five or six. Actually she's already told me this five or six or seven times: something either me or Allison said when we were kids about how my mother couldn't stand Rose and the truth is that it's obviously something Allison said, because when we were that age I wanted everything to be perfect. That's how I related to the horror that was going on. I was powerless and I wanted to make it okay. But anyway here my mother is bringing up this ridiculous story again, and she says sometimes I think Rose is paranoid. I say you sound paranoid. And: why don't you just tell her to shut up?

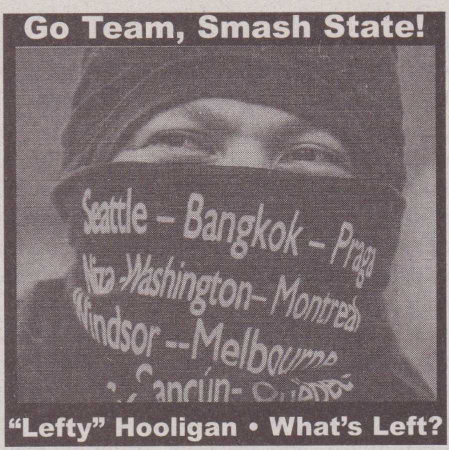
Shut up. That's something they used to say when I was growing up. Then it was something I used to say. It's not something I say now, is it?

Why don't you just say: is that all you remember?

My mother laughs, maybe we're connecting. When we get to Baltimore, the doors on our side of the car don't open even though they haven't warned us. We have to walk to the front and my mother's stuck trying to get my bag past everyone who's getting on the train. And I'm worried the train will leave, so I'm standing in the door and this conductor comes over and starts yelling: why are you holding up my train? Listen, I say, my mother is stuck on the train, no one made an announcement that we had to go to the front, and the conductor says: why are you holding up my train? We're both yelling, and then maybe he remembers some de-escalation training so he lowers his voice and I lower mine. And someone says, he's just trying to help her, and there's my mother, and the conductor says you can't do that, you can't hold up the train, the train could start and you'd end up on the tracks.

Why did I get so upset is what I'm thinking. And: I can't believe I said: my mother. Couldn't I have said someone is stuck on the train? Someone. My mother. I can't believe I said that. Validation in the form of an emergency. And: I can just imagine—the train starts and there I am on the tracks torn to pieces so that my mother doesn't end up in Wilmington, torn to pieces for my mother—I mean could there be anything more tragic?

Dammit am I exhausted from my crazy book tour for my new novel, *So Many Ways to Sleep Badly*! Feel free to check in on me via my blog, nobodypasses.blogspot.com. You can also send me love letters and/or delicious threats via www.mattildabernsteinsycamore.com, which includes past *MRR* columns. Or you can write to me at 537 Jones Street, #3152, San Francisco, CA 94102



Go Team, Smash State!

“Lefty” Hooligan • What's Left?

The debate on the Left, in the days when the Soviet Union still existed, frequently boiled down to those who championed socialism in the abstract versus those who defended “real existing socialism.” Abstract socialism refers to any type of socialism that, with brief revolutionary exceptions, hasn't actually been tried out in the real world. Anarchism, left communism, syndicalism, council communism, De Leonism, autonomism, democratic socialism, utopian socialism, communalism, libertarian socialism—plus the scores of variations within each category—comprise the broad, inchoate field of socialism in the abstract. Real existing socialism is much simpler, consisting of a few shopworn social democratic and a half dozen Leninist regimes, some of which continue to function to this day.

A similar distinction can be drawn between political systems in the abstract and real existing political systems. Political science, as it is taught in most universities, is an example of politics in the abstract, and *academe* is the perfect setting within which to discuss democracy, libertarianism, capitalism, socialism, fascism, communism, anarchism; all sorts of abstract political systems that have rarely, if ever, existed. In reality, all present-day political systems are but variations on a single theme, that theme being the corporate state.

This is an incidental insight that can be gleaned from a reading of *The Contours of American History* by William Appleman Williams. An inspiration for the New Left in the 1960s, Williams was a “hard revisionist” who argued that expansion and empire were essential to the American economy, and that the US was primarily responsible for the Cold War. He wasn't so much a Marxist as he was an anti-imperialist populist, along the lines of Mark Twain, who found common cause with old school, isolationist conservatives like Herbert Hoover, and who valued American regionalism and small community.

In *Contours*, Williams contended that the worldwide crisis that began with the first world war, and culminated in the second, gave rise to a near universal form of governance that can be called the corporate state. Strictly speaking, the corporate state is a creature of Italian fascism, of Ugo Spirito, Sergio Panunzio and Giovanni Gentile, who posited that an authoritarian ruling party could use the state to mediate between various powerful social interests, most notably the *bourgeoisie* and the *proletariat*, by incorporating them into social governance. The triumph of Bolshevism in Russia after 1917 produced a corporate state skewed to the left, with the working class allied with, and disciplined by a totalitarian Soviet state. Mussolini's march on Rome in 1922 established a corporate state tilted to the right, with the capitalist class allied with, and disciplined by an authoritarian Fascist state.

Bolshevism and fascism vied for influence in the United States after 1929, when social conditions during the Great Depression proved ripe for radical organizing. The labor movement in general, and the Communist Party in particular, were gaining strength and social revolution, not to mention socialism, was a distinct possibility. Roosevelt's response, in the form of the New Deal, created a corporate state in which a democratic state regulated capital, the full partner, and labor, the junior partner, in what amounted to a tripartite governance of American society. Very little effort is required to fit most countries today into one or another corporatist model.

The clear relevance of the corporate state idea in explaining much of current nationalist politics comes at a time when theories of corporatism have lost favor among academics. The multiplication of powers and interests in a society that makes it unmanageable by any corporate state; the explosion of racial, ethnic, even regional forms of tribalism; the spread of neo-liberal, free trade economics around the world through rampant globalization; the weakening of the nation-state as a viable unit in the world capitalist economy; these have all been cited to mitigate the importance of the corporate state as a way to understand how much of the world is run on the level of nation-states. The political realities of the corporate state, however, have not evaporated simply because political science professors are no longer interested in talking about them.

Take the 11/27/08 column, "Socialist Republic," by paleoconservative Patrick Buchanan. After noting that both George Bush and Barack Obama have learned the same interventionist lessons from studying the Great Depression, Buchanan sarcastically comments that "We are all Keynesians now."

> *Consider what we are about to do. Bush in 2008 spent 21 percent of GDP. States, counties and cities spent another 12 percent. Thus, one third of GDP is spent by government at all levels. Obama and Co. propose to raise that by another 10 percent of GDP. We may soon be north of 40 percent of gross domestic product controlled and spent by government.*
>
> *That is Eurosocialism.*

Actually, it's good, old American corporatism.

Another paleoconservative, Paul Edward Gottfried, points out in his book, *Conservatism in America: Making Sense of the American Right*, that American conservatives have failed to tackle, let alone defeat the behemoth of the modern administrative state. That's because conservative Republicans, no less than their liberal Democratic counterparts, accept as given the corporatist fundamentals of the New Deal (Social Security, unemployment insurance, government intervention in the economy) as well as certain additions made to it by Johnson's Great Society (Medicare, food stamps, civil rights legislation). Not even the doyen of small-government conservative Republicanism, Ronald Reagan, managed to dent America's administrative state. Indeed, the Federal government and the deficits accrued by it grew precipitously during the Reagan years.

The corporate state is real existing politics, whereas paleoconservatism is politics in the abstract. We're likely to witness intense internecine conflict on the Right in the next few years as conservatives try to figure out "what went wrong" in 2008. Few will defend the real existing big government conservatism of George Bush as they fight over the mantle of small-government Goldwater/Reagan conservatism in the abstract. Yet, much as anarchism went down to defeat time and again against Leninist communism in the real world, I suspect that, in practice, small government paleoconservatism will be routed by big government conservatism every time. Well, perhaps not in the platform of the Republican party, but certainly in actual governance.

The administrative state, the corporate state, is inescapable. Nor would the capitalist class wish to get rid of it, even if they could. I once joked that, if the Libertarian party's dream was realized tomorrow, and the state was abolished in order to achieve a pure *laissez-faire* capitalism, the corporations would purchase and install a new government the day after. Capitalists realize the need for a strong, regulatory state, if for no other reason than to bail them out when they fuck up. Then there's the military, handy for enforcing capital's interests overseas, and the police, equally useful in quelling riot, rebellion and revolution at home. Labor's participation in the corporate state, as well as the social programs engendered by that participation, might be up for question or attack. America's corporate state is not.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@ mac.com.

A bunch of Clinton- and Carter-era hacks. George W. Bush's leftover defense secretary. Of the dozens of Obama's top appointments announced to date, there's only one liberal: David Bonior, who ran John Edwards' primary campaign as secretary of labor. Maybe.

Remember the Democratic primaries? Among the top three presidential contenders, Edwards was the liberal. Hillary Clinton, who repeatedly voted for war against Afghanistan and Iraq (and Iran!), was to Edwards' right. Obama, who also voted for war but didn't commit to Clinton's bigger healthcare plan, was even more conservative than she. "Mr. Obama," David Sanger wrote in The New York Times, "is planning to govern from the center-right of his party."

If nothing else, I had guessed, the U. of Chicago egghead would appoint a team of the Best and Brightest. We're getting the Rest and the Rightest.

Asked by a reporter how his center-right coalition of Republicans, pro-war Democrats and other assorted has-beens squares with a campaign marketing hope, change, and Soviet-inspired propaganda posters, Obama pledged to "combine experience with fresh thinking."

"Understand where the vision for change comes from, first and foremost," Obama said. "It comes from me. That's my job, to provide a vision in terms of where we are going and to make sure then that my team is implementing [that vision]." Pretty words.

Obama's argument—that his center-conservative cabinet will carry out radical change if he orders them to do so—is denied by recent history. The US government, as micromanager Jimmy Carter learned, is too big for the president to manage on his own. And, as George W. Bush learned after 2000, the people you hire are more likely to change you than you are to change them.

As governor, Jacob Weisberg wrote in his book *The Bush Tragedy*, Bush was fondly remembered by Texas Democrats as a moderate Republican who crossed the aisle to get things done. But campaign manager Karl Rove "used his influence to steer Bush away from being the president he originally wanted to be—the kind of center-right consensus-builder he was as governor of Texas—and into a too-close alliance" with the right wing of the GOP.

Even more fateful was Bush's choice of Dick Cheney to head his vice presidential search committee. Cheney chose himself (!), then hijacked the would-be "compassionate conservative's" presidency by packing it with "neoconservative ideologues, who combined hawkish American triumphalism with an obsession with Israel," as Juan Cole put it in a memorable 2005 essay for *Salon*.

By February 2001 Cheney had already ensured that the Bush Administration would focus on international affairs to the exclusion of everything else. He also made sure that his aggressive, Manichean worldview would prevail in cabinet discussions. "Cheney had fifteen military and political advisors on foreign affairs, at a time when the president's own National Security Council was being downsized," marveled Cole.

The moderate guy who ran against "nation building" in 2000 never stood a chance against his own staff.

It's possible that Obama has stronger force of will than Bush. But, so far in the 219-year history of electoral politics, there is no example of a president successfully enacting radical changes without like-minded lieutenants to carry them out. Will Obama be the first to change his cabinet's spots? Probably not.

"The last Democratic administration we had was the Clinton Administration," Obama said in his attempt to calm his liberal base, which is starting to get hip to the reality that Obama is about to betray them. "So it would be surprising if I selected a treasury secretary who had had no connection with the last Democratic administration, because that would mean that the person had no experience in Washington whatsoever." Or maybe not. What about Paul Krugman, the Princeton economist and Times columnist who won the Nobel Prize this year? He's progressive. As a bonus, he's been right about everything for years.

"We want ideas from everybody," Obama continued. But not from liberals. And not from the socialists John McCain had everyone stirred up about. Speaking of McCain, the right-wing Arizona senator is tickled pink: "I certainly applaud many of the appointments that President-Elect Obama has announced," McCain said last week. "Senator Obama has nominated some people to his economic team that we can work with, that are well-respected."

What Obama and McCain consider respectable might not pass muster with polite company. Obama's economic advisor Lawrence Summers thinks women aren't good at math or science, which bodes poorly for the quality of his own thinking. Marie Curie, call your office.

Former Bush intelligence official John Brennan was, until last week, Obama's pick to head the CIA. *ABC News* reported: "Brennan had been a top aide to former CIA Director George Tenet during what critics of the Bush administration refer to as that agency's descent into darkness post-9/11, and he had spoken in favor of various controversial counterterrorism strategies, including enhanced interrogation techniques and rendition—sending terror suspects to allies where torture is legal." After Congressional liberals threatened to block his nomination, Obama crossed Bush's torturer off the list.

Lefties who swooned on Election Night might as well get used to the truth: Obama isn't one of you. Never was. Never will be.

ANYONE CAN BE THE BASTARD
MANTOOTH

Any resident of Europe will be able to tell you that they are constantly being bombarded by the shittiest Australians "down under" has to offer. I learned this quickly while I was off sowing my wild oats and becoming a worldly motherfucker in Europe. My program allowed me a month to travel, during which time I ran into many Aussies who had no idea who or what "Rupture" was.

"Baser Apes?"

"Huh?"

"Freudenstein's House?"

"Scuse me?"

"Cunt of God?"

"Crikey!"

I guess they wouldn't ever say "crikey"—I'm just still feeling a little bitter because they pretty much ruined one of my potential columns from a few years ago that would center around my "Six Degrees of Rupture" theory. You see, it was this really funny thing where I would make up a bunch of stupid shit about how every person in Australia was probably in Rupture at one time, or somehow knew Gus Chamber. Out of the five people that read my column, two people would care about Rupture and one person would perhaps chuckle.

Other great column ideas from that trip that never came to fruition: 1) the time I ate some dog shit for money, 2) pissing myself in church for no good reason, 3) something about foreskins and vegans.

I was in Prague when I came up with number three. I had spent much of my time there trying to escape the iron party grip of some frat boy Australians that had somehow gotten a hold of some mushrooms and were constantly trying to get me to go out and drink absinthe with them. At first I didn't know better and I went out for a "pint" (as some may call it).

The details are not necessarily important or funny, but the night ended with one of them lighting half of his head on fire while trying to ignite a shot of absinthe in his mouth. During his frantic attempt to extinguish his stupid face, he somehow instigated a fight with some unassuming businessmen who promptly pulled a knife out and carved the flaming Aussie's right thigh open all over the bar.

So naturally I declined all future invitations and I always managed to "have something going on that night but maybe I'll catch up with you blokes later."

One night, I managed to spot a half-torn flyer on a telephone poll for a Tragedy show by the stadium on Petfiín Hill. I found the address on my map and decided to walk, since I had this irrational fear of public transportation at the time—even if that meant traveling an unreasonable distance (about one mile) in the cold rain up a substantial hill to go see a band I really wasn't that crazy about anyhow.

The show was in the basement of one of those weird rectangular dormitories right in front of the Velk? Strahovsk? stadium. It took me about 40 minutes to actually find the show because there were not punks loitering about. I had to ask some friendly tennis players "punk?" and they pointed me in the right direction.

I think some screamo band was about to play when I went downstairs, so I spent their set digging through distros. I remember being really excited because someone was selling Autoritär t-shirts. I bought one and a bunch of patches that I never sewed onto anything (but if I ever have to let people know I am a super huge Warsore fan, I will have the patch to prove it). Other terrible financial decisions I made that night: 1) a live Bolt Thrower bootleg cassette tape 2) a video of live performances by Spazz, Charles Bronson, Asshole Parade, Enemy Soil, and Hellnation that turned out to be a millionth generation copy.

On the other hand, I was able to score another copy of Rupture *Baser Apes* (I picked the first one up in Vienna) and SNFU's *...And No One Else Wanted to Play* LP.

Halfway through the Tragedy set I realized that I was getting pinkeye. I went to the bathroom and my eye was almost swollen shut and crusting over very quickly. It was then that I decided to make a hasty retreat back to my hostel.

It had stopped raining, but I walked into a wall of cold air as I got to the top of the basement steps. It felt nice against my puffy right eye and I looked forward to the walk home in hopes that it would make the

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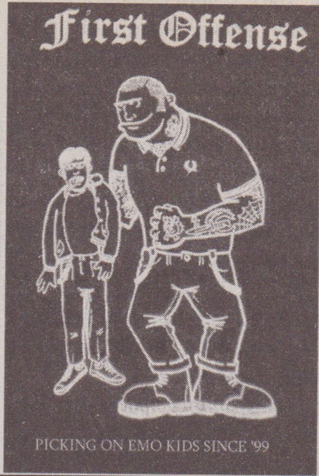
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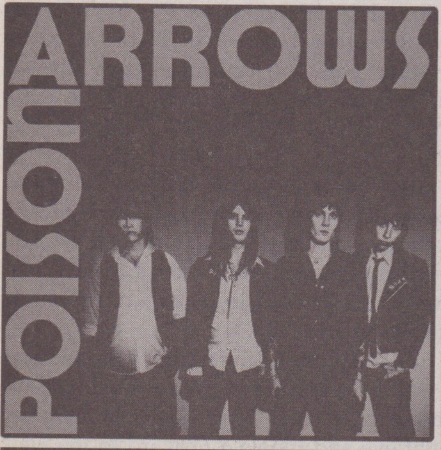

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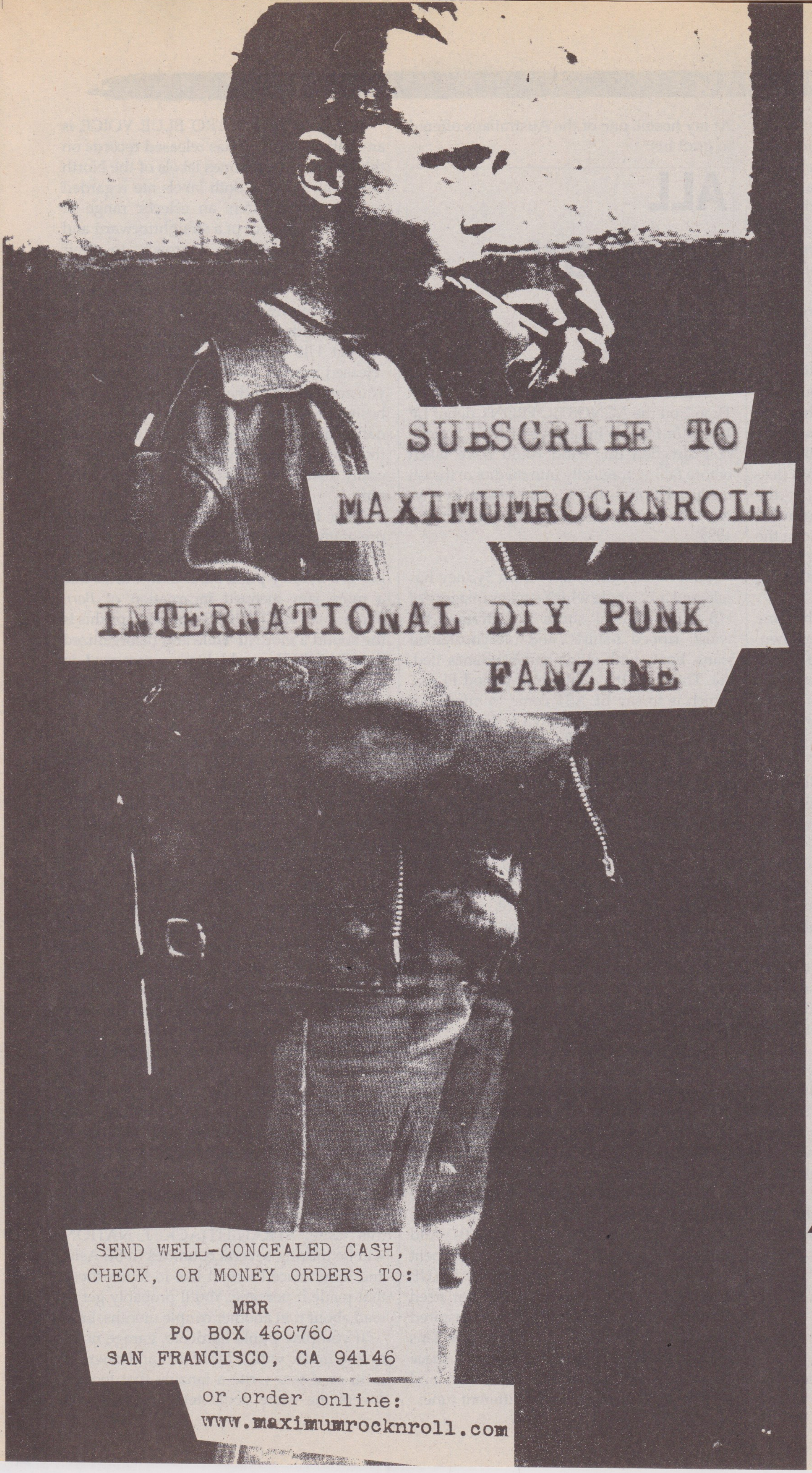

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swelling go down. By this time most of the floodlights surrounding the stadium had been shut off, and I felt like I stood alone at the top of the hill overlooking the city. I stopped for a moment and noticed the way that the stars, lights of old town, and their reflections off the river seemed to blend into each other through the haze of my infected eye.

I turned around and noticed two dark shapes walking towards me on the right. I heard something spoken hurriedly in Czech and the one figure tackled me, spilling my crust merch out of my arms. I was punched in the face repeatedly while the other one patted me down looking for my passport.

I didn't take it with me that night because I was afraid I'd get it soaked in the rain (losing all my stamps). I just stared at the shapes, and the one on top of me continued to hit me in the face and then kick me in the stomach until I vomited the sausage I ate earlier all over the SNFU record lying underneath my head.

I woke up facedown underneath some bushes further down the road before dawn. Mulch and pine needles were glued to my face with blood. There was a three inch gash across my nose, and for some reason one of my shoes was missing. I walked up the road and collected my scattered records and tapes.

Feeling in no particular hurry, I shuffled down the hill and into the first coffee shop that was open. I sat down for a moment and organized my belongings in a neat little pile (still no shoes) as the woman behind the counter watched me, not with a look of concern for my fucked up face, but impatience. I think she was trying to clean the tables.

I never had an espresso before, and I'm not exactly sure why this was the time to have one. Similarly, I wasn't sure what I was expecting when the barista handed me a tiny ceramic cup with a few ounces of frothy brown piss. I sat and begrudgingly sipped this bullshit in hopes it would motivate me enough to go find a hospital. I pulled the rest of my money out from my soiled SNFU record (I had stuffed the rest of my money in the sleeve before I left the show) and bought a vegan muffin/brick that dislodged one of my loosened teeth.

It was when I started picking at the scab on my face that I opened up the wound and the skin became loose and floppy. Sitting there toying with this scrap of skin on my nose, the barista called out from across the shop, "Please stop doing that."

"What?"

"That is disgusting."

I stopped. It was then that I noticed that the motherfuckers took my Rupture record. At my hostel, one of the Australians offered to graft his.

ALL FOREIGN JUNK

Before we start, let it be said that "With Time," on the AGNOSTIC FRONT debut LP *Victim In Pain,* is indicative of what a glorious direction this band could have taken before falling tragically into mediocre thrash metal territory—and a good lesson to anyone who thinks this band is relevant beyond 1985.

Five things:

First of all, REPOMAN from Sydney has released a 7" single which evokes imagery of HB skins: flannel shirts tied around the waist, ripped t-shirts, and bleach stained jeans, boots with studs and bandanas tied, etc. That guy. It's a little mid-period FLAG, which is to say BL'AST come to mind, but there's always that CIRCLE JERKS guy holding a bottle trailing piss. Four songs here, definitely recommended to those that don't shy from hard rock.

Second of all, THE WANKYS are England's proudest exponents of distorted noise fuckery, and the *Noise Punk* EP is a choice point of entrance into their filthy world. This has probably seen its way through the digestive tract of your local punk record emporium, but I only dug it out today for the second time since its purchase and have found its sordid sonic sensibilities of some considerable worth. I would recommend it to those who praise DISORDER and CHAOS. UK, that is.

Third point of today's short lesson is that Kraut-core band NARSAAK has unleashed a 7" of decidedly un-Kraut rock sounding Motor-metal. Like a humourless MIDNIGHT, but falling into common traps of MOTORHEAD fans that like TRAGEDY, the record attempts to invoke emotive warmth to the indecipherable lyrics by utilizing the dreaded octave harmonies that have plagued hardcore since the mid-'80s. And this makes me wish their parents had spent more time playing them AMON DUUL records, because the world does not need another mediocre MOTORHEAD-inspired tune. If one of those Kraut hardcore fans could mine the potentials of their rich space / psych rock history for inspiration and direction, I'd be humming a different tune.

Fourth. HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE is an Italian band that has released records on the SS and Sacred Bones labels of the North American Empire. Both labels are regarded as follows: SS offers an eclectic range of bands that lean out of a straightforward and easily distinguished approach to their respective genres—which vary greatly but are generally reliable to offer classic hits; SB offers primarily synth-punk, or music that utilizes synth as a primary ingredient.

That HIS ELECTRO BLUE VOICE has released records on both labels should tell you something of their sound, though I am hesitant to offer a wholehearted recommendation as to their worth, having only given their records cursory listenings and being easily distracted whilst they have been spinning.

Hear here the ritualistic summoning of pre-glam Hollywood. The fifth item I'd like to consider is the CIRCLE PIT 7". CIRCLE PIT is a Sydney punk band that sounds like a more jam inclined incarnation of *Born Innocent* era RED KROSS—or perhaps this is the sound a more juvenile and disorganized BLUE CHEER would have summoned in their first few demo sessions as they attempted to sound like the loudest band on the fucking planet.

Satanic pimp Kim Fowley would be salivating at the sight of these young, eagerly weaving a web to turn them out onto the billboard charts and line his pockets, as they have just the kind of youthful energy and shambolic effrontery that pervert vampires like he exploited daily in yonder years.

It's a short one today. Hard times have been mine these past weeks, and attempting to focus on record purchasing and further quantifying the results of this activity has not been a high priority. The disintegration of the Australian economy—as our government fails to invest in Australian industry and foreign countries loot our resources (English cunts)—will probably mark a decided change in the tone of future columns. But, fuck, economics is beyond my realm of understanding, and dribbling over the tired spiritual economies of punkism is my lot, so ALL FOREIGN JUNK will trudge into the recession with the hope that you're not feeling the crunch too bad, pal.

In conclusion, during the publication of this issue, STRAIGHTJACKET NATION will be touring several countries in SE Asia, and in advance I would like to thank those that made it possible. You'll probably get to read about it in another couple months, bub!

If you play punk, hardcore, garage noise or any music with a bit of grit and rawness to it, or if you write a fanzine that loosely covers the same sonic territory, and you

DON'T live in the US, Japan or Sweden, get in touch.

Daniel Stewart: PO Box 239, North Carlton, Victoria3054 AUSTRALIA. If you'd like to email me, try distortthe world@gmail.com.
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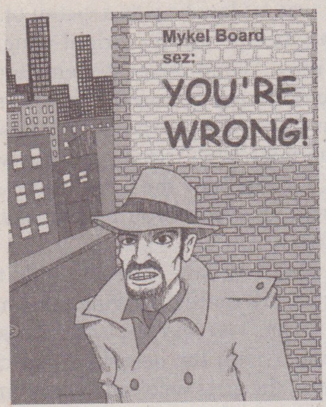

"Americans always do the right thing... when they have absolutely no other choice." —Winston Churchill

Naked, I lay on the bed. I slip a hand behind my back, through my legs. Grabbing my balls from behind, I pull them down between my legs. I press my thighs together, holding the balls under me. My cock rests on top. It's no longer a cock, but a large clitoris. I've made myself a girl. I can diddle my clit to *EuroAngels Hardball 4*. Diddle. Diddle. Diddle.

It's election night. I can't watch. I want to diddle myself away from the hell of a McCain presidency. Worse. He won't make it a year. Sarah Palin, not *MILF* enough for me, will be in the White House. It'll be worse than Hillary Clinton. I don't want to watch the news. Watch the inevitable Red State creep, as the blood-colored states spread in the smear of American moronocity.

Americans are stupid vengeful people. The crackers of the Carolinas. The old Florida Jews. The hardhats in Ohio. They'd rather give up their homes to a bailed-out bank, than vote for a Negro. I know them.

Americans are the dumbest, most racist, most hateful, people on earth. Like they're gonna vote for Barack Hussein Obama. *No we can't!*

I've got to stop thinking about this. My clit won't harden. That nub won't poke up. Won't swell to its girlish heights. I'm beating a dead larva. Choking a limp chicken. Spanking a... What's that?

Through my closed window comes the sound of cheering. People in the street. Screaming. Applauding. Stomping in joy. Horns honk. I can't fuckin' believe it. He must've won. Somehow, he did it.

I turn off the DVD and switch to CNN. There's McCain now, talking to a cheering crowd:

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"That Barack Obama managed to inspire the hopes of so many millions of Americans, who had once wrongly believed that they had little at stake or little influence in the election of an American president, is something I deeply admire and commend him for achieving.

This is an historic election, and I recognize the special significance it has for African-Americans and for the special pride that must be theirs tonight.

A century ago, President Theodore Roosevelt's invitation of Booker T. Washington to dine at the White House was taken as an outrage in many quarters.

America today is a world away from the cruel and frightful bigotry of that time. There is no better evidence of this than the election of an African-American to the presidency of the United States."

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African-American? Presidency? Fuck! He won. We won!

Pride for African-Americans? Hah! Pride for Whitefolks, I'd say. Pride for Jews! Pride for everyone who voted for the guy even though (because?) he *wasn't* one of them. I feel like dancing. Walking on air. Kissing a fat girl.

They did it. Those shallow, stupid Americans. Those I had so much contempt for. Those crackers. Those Jews. Those shlubs in Ohio. They did it My mind drifts to the future.

I'm in Europe. It's 2009. The Euro has declined enough to let me visit my old friends in Germany. I get off the plane and go to immigration. I flash my American passport, something that usually fills me with embarrassment, if not dread. Not this time.

"Listen, you fucker," I think at the immigration agent. "Don't say a thing. I don't want to hear it. I don't want that *Oh, a stupid American* sneer. I don't want see your hands grip the passport, thinking *another violent thug*.

Fuck you. We elected Barack Obama. We're the first western nation. First "white" nation to have a leader who's not white. You didn't do it. You couldn't do it. *We* did it. We, America... Something I haven't felt part of since Jimmy Carter gave amnesty to the draft dodgers. Me, a United Statesian and *proud* of it. My mental flag waving strong.

Flash ahead to the *real* future: Gilberto invites me to Boston to see THE DWARVES. The show is before a farewell-for-two-weeks party for him. He's going back to Sonora to see the family, and prepare for the great LATIBBEAN PARTY in Mexico 2009. I'll post the details on Latibbean.org as I get 'em.

I'm at the show with Gilberto, some of his friends, my pal John R. and his daughter. (Everybody thinks she's his girlfriend.) The Dwarves, of course, are great—a little calmer than they used to be, but still a lot of fun. The surprise of the night, however, is a band called THE UP-RISING.

UP-RISING is pure hardcore fun. A big singer with So-Cal attitude. (Looks like he's been around. Mid-30s, hardcore crust on the edges—how come I never heard of these guys?). He even gets the crowd to sing along to the punk rock hits of the '80s. Can you say "6-Pack"? Most of the audience was still sperm when that came out.

I forgot my earplugs, so I chew on a few napkins and stick the spitballs in my ears. Not the best sound protection, but even a daughter is better than nothing.

I love the band, but I can't hear the patter between songs. Something about the anniversary of a Bali Bombing—with a lot of *God bless yous*.

Uh oh, I think. Some stupid anti-Muslim redneck garbage. I'm glad I don't understand it. Besides, the band is so good—I don't want to spoil a good time.

After the show, I go over to the merch tables. I don't plan to buy anything. I just wanna tell The Up-rising how much I liked their set... despite that God Bless You shit. I also want to ask 'em about Bali bombing. So what if it's an anniversary. Every day is a bombing anniversary. Do they mention Hiroshima? Belgrade? Are they spreading some kind of anti-Arab bullsh... Ok. I'll let 'em speak for themselves.

"Yo!" I say in my typically shy way. "You guys were great. Best surprise since Kissy Kamekaze. But..."

Before I can finish, my pal John, who's got better hearing than me, perks up.

"You a surfer?" he says.

The guy, Crab, the band's singer, nods. How the fuck did John know?

"So you were in Bali for that surfing thing," John continues.

Looks like I missed something.

"Yeah," he says. "I was the only American who lived."

"I heard about it," says John.

"You don't know," says Crab. Then he tells the story.

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"I'm in Bali for this surfer's fest—I guess you know about it. We all go to this disco... all the surfers, I mean. I'm not much for discos, but since everybody was going... So we're inside and I'm just talking to this guy. A friend of mine, fellow surfer: blond hair, kinda skinny, you know, the kinda guy that girls like. Well-liked, see—suddenly he explodes.

It's a huge sound. Louder than anything in *my life. My hearing's still wrecked from it. Can't hear at all out of this ear. But just then I don't hear the sound at all. I just see my friend... explode.*

I see his head blow off, just go into the air, just pow, it's flying. His mouth is still working—jaw going up and down—even eight-feet in the air, just his head. Everything's in slow motion. His insides explode. Guts coming through his body. Flying into my face. Covering me. Can you imagine... imagine... imagine what it's like being covered by your friend... pieces of your friend. Blood, guts... His skin all over me... Skin in my eyes... over my eyeballs. Intestines in my mouth, my nose, breathing intestines. Inhaling intestines. I can still taste it. How many people know... know... know the taste of raw human guts. I know. I'll never forget it. They hit me so hard in the mouth, almost knocked my teeth out. Your friend. And there he is. You're inhaling him. Tasting his blood. It was warm, not hot. Hotter than your own blood, you know when you get a cut or something? And his flesh. Seeing pieces of his body.

Just blam. Your pal—turns inside out. One second he's just standing there, next second he's... he's... he's in pieces. All over you. It's not something you forget. You can't forget. Never forget..."

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He stops to breathe. Close his eyes. If he cries, I'm gonna lose it. He doesn't cry.

"I thought you might be a surfer," says John. "I'm a surfer too, in Boston. But I was thinking about going to that Bali party. It's a good thing I didn't."

"Yeah," says Crab. "A good thing."

"Holy fuck!" I think, forking over five bucks for the band's homemade CD. "If that were me, I'd wanna kill 'em all. Al Qaeda, Joe Ali-salaam, a random lady walking down the street in a black headscarf. I'd be a maniac. I'd move to Israel. Join ARAB-BUSTERS. Vote for Joe Lieberman."

But here's this guy, the only American who lived. And there's not one speck of hate coming out of him. Not one phlegm-spot of malevolence.

It's America. Hooey! Some new America. It's people saying *Yes, We Can*. It's not an eye-for-an-eye. It's compassion. It's *lack* of hate. Not *kill 'em all*. It's something more than bumper sticker brains and gun racks.

Yes, we fuckin' can.

By the time you read this, I'll be back from a trip to South Carolina. And in North Carolina, besides buying pecan log rolls at Stuckey's, I can actually talk to people. I can say "Hi. I'm an American too. Maybe we even voted for the same person."

Back on the bed, blood rushes to my clitoris. I rub up and down. *Yes*, we have the best chance ever. Yes, we can. We can have a white country lead by a colored guy named Barack Obama. I rub harder. Faster.

Yes, we can. We can feel pain and not respond with hatred. Yes, we can. We can cheer and honk horns for more than a football win! Yes we can! My labia swell with blood as my little girl-nub hardens in my hand. Yes, we can. I rub more. Yes, we can. Yes. Yes. *Yes*!!!

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ENDNOTES: [email subscribers (god@mykelboard.com) or website viewers (www.mykelboard.com) will get live links and a chance to email comment on the column]

> *Glad the Brits are on it dept:* BBC world news reports that Maasai herdsmen in Kenya are using an age-old contraceptive, the "olor," to protect their goat herds from a drought.

The locals make an *olor* from cowhide or a square piece of plastic. Then, they tie it around the belly of the male goats. It keeps them from screwing.

The herdsmen are using the device to limit the goat population and make sure there aren't too many animals grazing on sparse vegetation.

"We don't want them to breed in this drought," says Ole Ngoshoi Kipameto, a Maasai goat owner.

> *Keeps her a virgin dept:* A Jesuit magazine has apologized after inadvertently publishing an advertisement for a Virgin Mary Statue wrapped in a condom. The artist intended it as a protest against the church's opposition to condom use.

The Rev. Drew Christiansen, editor-in-chief of *America*, said that the condom was not visible in the black and white proofs they used to review the final draft of the magazine.

The headline for the ad read, "Unique Contemporary Religious Art Work for Sale." In the text, the statue was called "Extra Virgin," and was described as "a stunning 22 cm high statue of the Virgin Mary standing atop a serpent wearing a delicate veil of latex."

The statue was made by Steve Rosenthal, who said he was an artist in London. Rosenthal released a statement saying he placed the ad as a protest against Vatican opposition to the use of condoms.

> *Again with the kids dept*: Amazingly, the Supreme court ruled (5-4) that states could not use the death penalty against people convicted of child rape. Though they did not say they enjoyed the crime, the judges said that, "in terms of moral depravity and of injury to the person and to the public, it cannot be compared to murder." They did not mention where dropping bombs on civilians fits on the moral depravity scale.

> *Mixed emotions dept:* Remember Elliot Spitzer, the NY Governor who promoted stronger laws against prostitute patrons? He was caught with a $10,000 prostitute. I was sad he was a victim of a horrible law. I was glad it was *his* law he was a victim of.

Likewise, the arrest of right-wing evangelist Tony Alamo mixes my emotions. On one hand, it's a joy to see the bastard nailed. On the other, the charge is "possession of child pornography," clearly a crime with no victim. I mean, how the hell does *possession* hurt anyone, even if you believe *making* of porn does?

Oh well, bad law—but it couldn't have happened to a more deserving person.

> *Now THAT's an emergency dept:* Local cops are familiar with the neighborhood cranks. You know, the guys who call 911 to complain about their neighbor's squeaky bedsprings. But my favorite crank is Reginald Peterson of Jacksonville Florida. He called 911—twice. Why? A *Subway* restaurant did not prepare his Italian sandwich correctly. They left off the sauce.

If that's not a bigger crime than having kiddie porn, it should be.

> Then there's the Longmont, Colorado guy who tried to get free porn from the locals. He told the clerk he was a detective who wanted to check the films to make sure there were no underage people in them. He even flashed a badge. He told the store to give him the DVDs "to inspect." Though it was a good scam, it didn't work. The store gave the *real* cops store surveillance tapes from when the fake cop was demanding vids. They haven't found him. Yay! He didn't get any free DVDs. Awww.

> *It's catching dept:* Not to be outdone by Christians with their drive-in churches, *Utne Reader* reports that "Mega-Mosques" are rising all over America. One in northern Virginia has more than 5,000 families. Many offer church-like programs, including gymnastics and Boy Scout training. Oy vey!

> *Criminally correct dept:* In *Car & Travel Magazine* (Oct. 2008) they use a photo to illustrate an article about car models popular with thieves. The young man, in a hoodie, with a jimmy stuck in a car window, is white. Hmmm, shouldn't they have made it a girl? A grandma? What's with this cliché that all car thieves are young men? Are they prejudiced?

In case you're wondering what to steal, the most popular models for 2007 were the 2000 Honda Civic, the 1994 Honda Accord, and the 1991 Toyota Camry. It is not clear from the article—or photo—how many of the thieves are Japanese.

> *More on sackcloth & ashes dept*: (I copped

this from the internet someplace. I wrote about this plan before. Evidently, it flopped.)

Birmingham Mayor Larry Langford castigated a local clergy group because he doesn't think enough churches participated in his sackcloth and ashes rally back in April. He also criticized churches for espousing prosperity theology (a valid point, but pretty funny coming from the man who accessorized his sackcloth with a Rolex and designer shoes).

In 2002, about the same time he was running for county commission, Langford had accumulated about $70,000 in credit card debts and department store bills. Most of that debt was for clothes.

> *How to get money from the government dept:* Kyle wrote me that his girlfriend Angie can't stay with him because of a "no contact" order on his probation. So she was homeless.

The solution? Kyle punched her in the face and kicked her in the ribs. It left a couple hardcore bruises. She then went to the women's assistance center for homeless women. She told them her ex husband beat her up.

The center called the cops and took her to the battered women's shelter. With a copy of the police report, the welfare office put her in the domestic violence assistance program and gave her a $1,500 check. Then they found her an apartment and paid the deposit and the utilities.

I think Kyle should charge for his services.

> *God does it again dept*: A recent *Science Illustrated* reports that 1,800 people participated in a prayer medical heart study.

The result? Those who knew that they were being prayed for were seven percent *more* likely to develop complications than those who either didn't know, or weren't prayed for at all.

The authors surmise the reason was that when people knew others were praying for them, it made them more nervous and they got sicker. I say bullshit. The real reason? God got pissed off at people disturbing her (God) with their stupid supplications. She wanted to teach them a lesson! Fuck you *and* your prayers!

> *Just keeps getting better dept:* My pal Sid Yiddish was in town. We did a Pennsylvania talk radio show on WDIY, and recorded 45 minutes for StoryCorps (Friday mornings on National Public Radio or www.storycorps.net). Sid stayed at my apartment during that time.

I like having guests every once in awhile, but a major problem is that they use up the toilet paper. Well, this time, God was listening to *me*!

Sid and I go ABC NO RIO to see the hardon inducing Kissy Kamekaze. We not only see them, but are amazed at TRIGGER EFFECT from Montreal. Those guys were literally bouncing off the walls—like Spiderman—or Jet Li. I've never seen that outside the movies. And they're *loud*. Reminds me of Motorhead—if Motorhead came from Seattle.

We're also treated to the funny, and scatological ENDANGERED FECES (best name of the year?). They're ecologically (scatological?) incorrect, throwing rolls and rolls of toilet paper over the crowd. Then the crowd throws the paper at each other. I haven't had so much fun since my first night in Trinidad!

Plus, Sid dives right in, rescuing two barely bothered rolls for our own private use. I'm using some of that paper right now, to clean up after *EuroAngels Hardball 4*.

BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

Let's start at my house, which is a basement apartment on the corner of Post and Leavenworth. Shit, that's not really Tenderloin enough so lets move it down, ok? Lets say I live on Turk and Taylor, and my apartment is nestled above the dresses and dick crowd of Aunt Charlie's, where I occasionally go to get fucked. I'm waiting for a pal of mine, one Robin Crossman, to come over. He's a skinhead but he's one of the boring kinds, so lets (for the purposes of storytelling of course) make him a radical Nazi kkinhead.

I'm a big-nosed Heeb, so this should add at least a modicum of danger to my story. Anyways, he ambles in and we amble off, ending up at Colby and Troy's house, which is located (conveniently) nearby. They're brothers who are both tall—but let's say they're sisters and are strikingly good-looking, and also not opposed to incest, which sounds great but really can make things uncomfortable.

Anyways, we buy a liter of Ancient Age, some other people show up (Dave, Amber, Jesse, who are all dwarves or "little people"), and then it's gone and then we are too. Somehow, now, I'm in a garage and a band is playing, and it's in the Mission—which is a place that is filled with Mexicans and people who roll their pant leg up when they go bicycling.

The twins are eying each other and licking their teeth (tongues are bloated, lips are cracked). Robin has disappeared because I forget what happened to him, so let's kill him off. Ian Stewart ran him over. Not sure what happened to the dwarves either. I call some broad a "dumpster" and she thinks I say "cum dumpster," which angers her and she spends the rest of the night flipping me the middle finger, which I find sort of obnoxious. But I revel in it because I am Brace Belden and I crave attention.

Anyways my ex-boyfriend Little Richard shows up during the first band, which is the Rolling Stones, and it gets weird for a second, so I sweat a lot and have to change clothes. The Stones finish, exit stage left (which is actually for some reason through a solid brick wall), and then the band East Bay Grease plays a groove rock version of seminal Boston classic "Just Head," which is confusing. Singer looks like he ain't ever been screwed before, but I guess head don't count as real fucking does it? So I suppose he could be a virgin and still have gotten just head. The words take on a new meaning.

Little Richard grabs my left testicle (which is on my right arm) and squeezes. I hate LR so much sometimes! Well I feed him some cocaine, which I found while I was dumpster diving (go behind Greek restaurants, they're usually filled to the brim with the stuff), and I go upstairs and make a Flirtini, which I proceed to drink despondently. Despair, death, doom, etc. Eat your heart out Gibbons.

I end up in a taxicab with Eric Holmgren, who looks like a software designer, and some broad whose name escapes me—I remember she only had one tit (which is really all I need—I only have one hand), and Neil Avilles, who is naked and weighs maybe 90 pounds wet. We are now in Chinatown because the cab driver (who turns out to be Michael Jordan's murdered father) drives us there.

A sign: Li-Po Lounge. This establishment is run by mean Chinese, and rented out by freak hipster jerks so they can do stupid stuff like hit one note on their guitar and then touch a bunch of pedals with their feet (usually bare). The bartender appears to be a transsexual, but isn't? (I didn't check, but I could sniff it, she was moist as I was dry). One beer was four dollars, so I bought fifteen with a check and poured 'em in the toilet—a little less poison in this world.

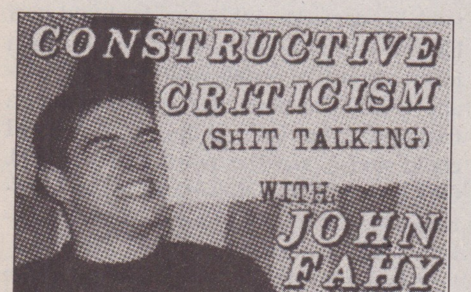
Who is playing? Bands. Hospitals (whose *Hairdryer Peace* LP I like quite a bit), but I didn't really watch them play. Instead I spent most of the time raising my voice at a thousand nameless blonde-brunette-man-woman-hip-freaks that were sprawled outside, resembling nothing less than rolling hills of good-looking irony bicycle art school Nebraska craft fair. Oh, my friend Randy was there too, but he disappeared for most of the show. He's twelve-feet tall and used to play in Fucked Up, so it's usually hard to miss him. But miss him I did, in every sense of the word (and every word).

Some girl told me I was a big jerk. Some other girl told me the same thing. Some guy shot me derisive looks. aAd the guy who got fired from *Maximum Rocknroll,* Mitch Cardwell, told him that I was actually a nice guy, but also sort of hurt my feelings when he told him that the minute he (Mitch) walked away I was going to call *him* a fat jerk. I am not a monster. I have no drooling dribbling mouth nor do I nosh on anything but red hot puss. I am a man, I am a man, I am a man. Remember *The Slog Movie*?

Bands are still playing. My friend Abe's band is playing. He is in a garbage band with some trash people that I won't even *mention* here in these hallowed newsprint pages (it costs money to print these words—believe it). They are terrible so I spend their set crying to Mitch about how I don't like any of these bands, and he hits me right in the kisser with the question, which is, "Then why are you here?" I can't answer this so I buy a Hospitals t-shirt. I don't know why I bought it—it's stupid looking and I'll never wear it. I should have bought nothing.

Why am I here? Well, to complain and then either try to fuck a girl with low self-esteem or fight a guy who's smaller than me. Call me what you will.

I leave with Eric Holmgren and two guys he pays to stand on either side of him and wear leather, and Abe—the streets awash in my tears. Eric invites us to his bachelor pad to imbibe the usual disgusting poisons these people destroy themselves with, and I accept at first, but it's past two and we can't even buy booze. So I just walk home and somehow make a meal and eat it. Then I take two shits, and when I take the third one, out this article came.



Tri-State Hardcore Noise

Last issue I wrote about Born Against's impact on punk ethics and music. This month I'm going to talk some more about the bands that came up in the wake of Born Against and other early Vermiform bands centered in the greater New York area. All of the bands and records below never got the recognition many of them deserved, possibly because they came up in the shadow of Life's Blood, Citizen's Arrest, et al. I think they represent some of the best hardcore music ever made.

What Born Against started in terms of noisy hardcore, and what Citizen's Arrest accomplished in scathing hardcore songwriting, the following expanded upon, and in some cases, topped. Also, many of the records listed below can still be tracked down in record bins across the country, so keep an eye out. I'm not a big fan of glorifying "the old days" of hardcore, but rarely are these records mentioned at all.

EUCHARIST – s/t LP – Mountain Records

Before starting LIMP WRIST, Mark Telfian was in several of the best bands from the Tri-State area in the '90s, including EUCHARIST. This LP has murderous, ugly vocals (comparable to THE HOLY MOUNTAIN); overdriving, negative hardcore. "Born In A Mess" is a perfect example of the catchiness of some of the songs on here. Lyrics convey nothing but hopelessness, disgust, and defeat.

MILHOUSE/FIFTY TWO X split 7" – Reservoir Records

THE FIFTY TWO X was reputed to be a train wreck, live—with their shows degenerating into fights between the audience and each other—before the band finally dissolved. This is the only proper release the band ever had, although they recorded other songs. The songs on here are great; pissy-pants hardcore with pain-in-the-ass kid vocals and catchy, noisy riffs. An unfortunate term that could be used (but shouldn't) is "emo violence." Someone kill IN/HUMANITY for popularizing that one. MILHOUSE pulls off three tracks of noisy hardcore—not their best, however.

HALFMAN - *As Everything Fell Apart* LP - Framework/Luddite Records

Ask anyone how I feel about this record. Where CITIZEN'S ARREST had keen views on societal decay, deeply personal, tortured lyrics, vicious vocals, and pulverizing, heavy hardcore that veered from fast—to slow, heavy dirges—HALFMAN did it all better. This is very heavy hardcore, with inhuman, throat-shredding vocals. HALFMAN pulls out some very eerie parts in the middle of hardcore riffs that are played as if total doom is a moment's notice away.

"Human Crush" is one of my all time favorite hardcore songs, lyically as well as musically, and "Accepting Empty Words" is a bulldozer of a hardcore song that makes my head want to explode.

HAIL MARY - *Crashing Down* EP - Vermiform Records

Another Mark Telfian band, although he sings instead of playing guitar. The opening title track of this record is one of my all time favorites—slow, creepy, plodding guitar melodies played over a moody rhythm section, and vocals and lyrics of pure despair. The other songs on here are also some of HAIL MARY's best, and a perfect example of their noisy, mid-paced awkward songwriting. HAIL MARY suffered many comparisons to BORN AGAINST—somewhat understandable but also kind of a cop-out for record reviewers. HAIL MARY's lyrics were certainly more personal in nature than B.A.'s, their vocals were more like B'LAST, and their music was more in line with other Telfian bands like EUCHARIST and FACTORY. This record is certainly still around, and is a classic. Vermiform may still have some left, in fact.

Honorable mentions: HAIL MARY *All Aboard the Sinking Ship* LP also on Vermiform, and *Glorious Morning* EP on Prank Records.

C.R./MILHOUSE split 7" – C.I. Records

C.R. really descend more from the INFEST tradition than the ABC NO RIO scene, but obviously on many of their records the influence was coming in, especially toward the end of their existence. The first song on their side is leaning more to this style, while still played with powerviolent intensity.

The second song is an excellent, played-straight cover of TEAM DRESCH's "Hate The Christian Right." MILHOUSE recorded two of their best songs ever for this record: "Patron Saint of Imbeciles Part 1" and "Part 2." MILHOUSE wrote songs somewhat like BORN AGAINST, but where BORN AGAINST would venture to light, fun or upbeat parts, MILHOUSE always stayed on message—and the message is hate, revulsion and disappointment. MILHOUSE's lyrics are laden with disgust for the idiotic: *"Assholes on all sides that beg for attention are beating me into submission." / "I have no pity for morons/Reap what you've sown."*

Honorable mention: C.R. discography is essential and available from Chainsaw Safety. MILHOUSE also have a split equally as good with COERCION.

SCAPEGRACE/CONNIPTION split 7" – Framework Records

CONNIPTION is another great Telfian band, but I don't think they do their best on this record. This is close to death metal territory for them and doesn't work as well as their straight-up hardcore songs. SCAPE-

GRACE makes this record on its own, with noisy, agonizing hardcore. The end of "Crumbs of Crumbs" is a catchy, disturbing riff that will not leave your head for days. These are easily their best songs, but also worthy of mention is the *Plead* 7", and the *Anger and English* double 7" compilation with MAN IS THE BASTARD, CAMPAIGN and FACTORY (as a side note, FACTORY were yet ANOTHER Telfian band with Jason O'Toole from LIFE'S BLOOD on vocals).

For the best of CONNIPTION, look for the HALFMAN/CONNIPTION split also on Framework Records.

V/A – *Nothing's Quiet on the Eastern Front* LP – Reservoir Records

Many of the bands mentioned above are on this, including: EUCHARIST, HALFMAN, C.R., COERCION, ASSFACTOR 4, SUPPRESSION, MONSTER X, BLACK ARMY JACKET, DEVOID OF FAITH, DISASSOCIATE, BRUTAL TRUTH, JUDAS ISCARIOT, and DROPDEAD. C.R.'s tracks start the record off and rule like everything else they ever did.

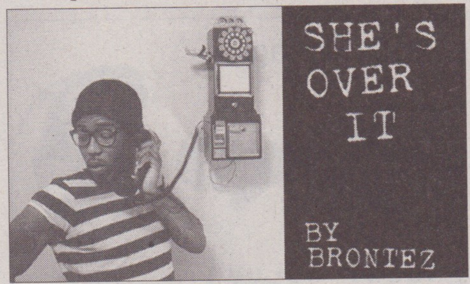
JUDAS ISCARIOT are another noisy band from the Tri-State area that have some good tracks on here, but not as good as their *Harrison Bergeron Bound* 7". The tracks from EUCHARIST are every bit as brutal as the LP tracks and are worth buying the LP for alone. Fortunately, the same could be said of HALFMAN's tracks, with were recorded the same time as their EP (also recorded at this time were HALFMAN's excellent tracks from the *Cry Now, Cry Later Vol. 4* double 7" comp.).

Obviously, many of the same characters come up again and again in this small scene besides just Mark Telfian. Reservoir Records was instrumental in much of this music getting out there, as well as Framework. Devon Cahill from DROPDEAD was in several of these bands, as well as Dan Crowell (who, in my opinion, is the best drummer any of these bands ever had). Crowell played on the *Crashing Down* 7" by HAIL MARY, *As Everything...* LP by HALFMAN, and the CELEBRITY MURDERS demo and 7" tracks. Justus Hanson did the cover art for many of these records, and they have a bleak vibe: grey images of figures drawn in detail that look lifeless, suffering, and enslaved.

Maybe none of the bands above shook hardcore to its foundations, but they are without a doubt some of the best of the '90s. Check them out, chumps.

ENDNOTES:

1. If anyone wants to hook me up with records or tapes of any bands mentioned above that I don't have, I'd be stoked, I think I have everything from most of these bands, but I know I don't have some EUCHARIST stuff.
2. The horror movie zine has been doing well, so I'm going to make another 100 copies and then get to work on the next one.
3. Sorry to anyone who went to the Human Crush website only to find a picture of the old Lemon Party picture—my good friend Felix did that number. Site will be a while still, for now check out some mp3s at the blog: www.humancrushrecordings.blogspot.com. DIVISIONS mp3s are up there, as well as some other bullshitting from me. DIVISIONS, *We Need to Talk* EPs are available from me for five bucks ppd. Also, Ebullition, Vinyl Junkie, and Grave Mistake have DIVISIONS EPs.
4. Anyone have any ideas on how to scam copies?
5. Contact: John Fahy/15011 Lakeside View Dr./Apt. 2402/Fort Myers/FL/33919

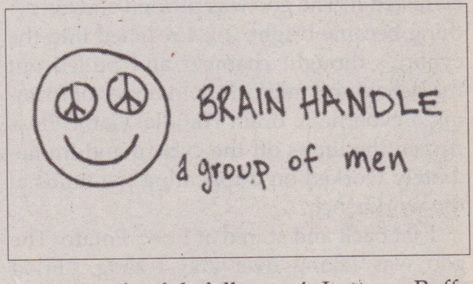


WHAT I'VE (VERY HONESTLY) LEARNED FROM BEING SOBER ALMOST ONE YEAR.

Sometime early last year I remember being at the Bar on Castro, (i.e. HELL) dancing and dropping it like it was hot (and whatnot) when all of a sudden I "came to" walking up the steps to my friends house. I looked at my face in his bathroom mirror and 40% of the skin on my left side was missing. I had no recollection of the accident. I took a shower, drank more whiskey, bleed on sheets, and sweat like a baby that had drank too much. The next day my mission was clear. I drank some cough syrup and more hooch. Got a call from my older brother, "You need to cool it, bitch." I was dating this daddy-cum-dear friend at the time that refused to get me new glasses until I rehab'd it. My mission was clear. I dried up, and that was early last January. I still smoke *ridiculous* amounts of weed. I'll still do a bump of coke if it's free. In taking some steps to get a reality check on my mental health and why I wanted to get faded so much, I learned some things I feel I should share with others that are healing. Here are some things you may/may not agree with:

1. After a li'l bit of not drinking, you lose that whole bloated yeast-belly look. Subsequently, people who couldn't have been more over it now wanna fuck you. It's kinda rad. Folks will wonder, "How'd you do it?"
2. With the new found privilege of model good looks and getting laid all the time, one also gets to look forward to the hot 'n' nasty world of *sober sex*. It's crazy. No more showing up to the bathhouse blacked out for this stud. My once ongoing case of drip dick is now (virtually) a thing of the past.
3. Sober sex made me aware of how selfishly I had taken alcohol for granted, and how whiskey really does make taking a dick in the ass *waaaaaaaaay* easier.
4.The hardest part of not drinking so far is having to explain my emotional outbursts without being able to preface it with the "I was wasted..." excuse. Part of me thought that the emotional outbursts would stop when I stopped gettin' wasted. PSYCHE!
5. Most fags drink so much because it is *soooo hard* to silence the ominous father issues without the distraction of a hangover…and another cocktail. Another sober way of dealing with father issues is taking it out on a boyfriend. If you lack the motivation for a boyfriend *fear not* sister, I do too.
6. Another sober way of dealing with your problems is writing a personal zine admitting all your deepest fears and shortcomings and put it in places all your enemies can read it. It's the literary evident to being a cutter and all those other bitches won't have *shit* on you. You get high off of your own sense of power. You'll start jerking off to your own bands' records. Being an ego maniac = FIERCE.
7. Being sober means my rent and *MRR* articles are *always* on time.
8. Being sober means I can remember all the lies I tell.
9. Being sober means I'm bored a lot.
10. Being sober means I'm not as full of hatred about it?

This might all change.
Love,
Brontez



Hello, fateful followers! Lottery Puffs here with some troubling news. Unfortunate developments have arisen in the Brain Handle Camp over the last few weeks. The superb security system to our basement apartment has been infiltrated. Luckily, we do not have renter's insurance because we do not own anything. Nothing was stolen because there was nothing to be stolen. As usual, we engage lockdown by ensuring that the lock on the door handle and the deadbolt are secure. All windows are locked. The refrigerator door is closed. The vents are slanted to obscure view. No one has touched the vents. Everything was normal. Yet, the other day, I noticed something very odd.

All members of Brain Handle were participating in the mandatory therapeutic finger-paint session when I noticed *the other one*. As you may or may not know, there are five members of Brain Handle: a drummer, a guitar player, another guitar player, a bass player, and a lead vocalist. But on this particular day, there were six individuals in the room. So, as not to disturb my comrades, I silently approached *the other one*. Sitting calmly, its fingers glided over the butcher's paper that we had retrieved from the shipping supply dumpster. My hand reached down and stroked the silky skin of *the other one's* arm. Dave Palumbo, the artist who drew the caveman on the back of one of our records, was the other one. He had entered in hopes of honing his finger-painting skills. I smelled him. *The other one* left a scent of cheap motor oil and fresh plastic.

I alerted the other members of the group. I informed them that Dave Palumbo was actually a cyborg. Eggs went absolutely berserk upon hearing this discovery and punched a hole into Dave's chest. We peered in and saw nothing but wires and blinking modules. Eggs slammed his face into the hole and bit down on wires, completely covering his face with cyborg oil. He went into a laughing fit and began playing with his legs. The oil had some adverse effects on the human brain. Dave Palumbo's cyborg vessel sat immobile with a giant gaping hole in its chest. Fried Potato approached it and kicked its head in. Glimmering yellow goo spilled forth—we all tasted it. The goo was pickled and everything became bright. 2 x 4 reached into the cyborg's thought chamber and pulled out the behavioral microchip. In hopes of forming a cybernetic Brain Handle, Gator Floss ripped the limbs off the cyborg and immediately worked on duplicating the limbs at the workbench.

I sat back and stared at Fried Potato. The goo was taking over and I sang, "Fried Potato is a good boy. Fried Potato is a good boy. Fried Potato is a good boy. Fried Potato is a good boy. Oh, yes, he is a good boy." The goo allowed me to gain access to Fried Potato's nervous system. I took Fried Potato's hand and stuck it in the cyborg's back pocket. His hand pulled out the cyborg's communication log. It read:

Lottery Puffs enters. Fried Potato enters. 2 x 4 enters. Gator Floss enters. Eggs Enters. Fried Potato exits. 2 x 4 exits. Gator Floss utilizes refreshment. Eggs utilizes lavatory. Lottery Puffs consumes liquid. 2 x 4 enters. 2 x 4 re-enters, consumes solid. Fried Potato re-enters, consumes liquid. Eggs consumes liquid. Gator Floss utilizes refreshment. Gator Floss removes article of clothing. Lottery Puffs consumes liquid. Eggs consumes liquid. 2 x4 consumes liquid, consumes solid. Fried Potato consumes liquid. Fried Potato consumes liquid. Lottery Puffs consumes liquid. Gator Floss enables viewing screen. Observation complete. File report.

Marissa Magic

GUEST COLUMN

As of late I've been really broke, as in broker than I've ever been. Like walking around scanning the ground for change broke. I've begun the process of going back to school, mainly because I have full on accepted the idea that without further education I'm doomed to the loop of shitty low paying jobs that I hate. The other day I was talking to a friend about work and she said something along the lines of "I'm ready to sell out and get an office job." I think the idea of office job=not punk is kind of dumb. I mean, office job or non-office job the likelihood of it being fulfilling is most likely nil. And, from my own experience, the pattern of being screwed over and fucked with is way more likely in the non-office job. I have a host of jobs right now, everything from library assistant to candy counter girl, and by far the jobs I hate the most, get paid the least, and get fucked with the most at are the customer service jobs.

Having bosses that treat you like an idiot and customers that treat you like a doormat seem to be the secret job description of most customer service jobs. I mean there are ok ones, I've had good ones, but I feel like the inherent power structure of this type of work leads to bad news for the most part. I've realized that I'm either going to have the customer service job where I get paid shit, I have to be on my feet all day, and I have to deal with the general public. (I'm a bit misanthropic.) Or I'll have the office job, where I'll probably get paid enough so I don't have to work much, I don't have to stand all day, and the general public isn't frantically rushing by constantly asking inane questions, like, "How do I open this door?" And it's not only the getting-fucked-with-in-customer-service jobs, but it's also getting fucked with and knowing that I'm getting paid 10 bucks an hour to listen to shitty music and smile and clean up after assholes while the boss dude plunks away on his Kurt Cobain limited edition guitar in his office and watches the cash flow in. I am so over being a worker that deals with the most physical aspect of profit, dealing with the people who bring the money in, and getting screwed in the end by people who lounge in their offices and write their own paychecks. Because, even though you, customer service worker, consistently deal with the people who bring in that money, the minute things get shitty, (economic crisis) you, customer service worker, are the one that endures getting your hours cut, lay-offs, loss of overtime and so on and so forth.

It's not like I'm working for some big fucking corporation, and really, the clothing store for example, where our bosses pump us up to sell the most of this or that or whatever—that ten bucks an hour wage isn't going to change if you sell that $100 dress, *no-oooo*. Boss dude's laughing all the way to the bank when you sell that dress. Also working in palaces of consumption and being relatively anti-consumer is pretty soul killing. But I have to eat, you know? So, I'm having this internal battle of "does going to graduate school make me not punk? Does working in a cubicle farm make me not punk?" And really, the more I think about it, part of being a punk is rising above and being autonomous. Keeping horrid low paying low respect retail jobs in order to stay punk is backwards to me. It's not like I'm trying to ascend the corporate ladder, I'm just over being at the bottom. Or being freaked out about going back to school because its kind of like complying with another institution. I mean, I don't really want to go through the machine just to be spit out into another rat race, but to be a total nerd about it, knowledge is power, so how can going back to school be that bad?

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But past the internal battle, there is a whole world of fucked-upness to work and rising in the ranks or whatever. Being from a middle class background I realize I have options, I do have a college degree, I have the option of going back to school, I have the option to "rise in the ranks" and though it is far more slow going in this failing economy it is a glimmer of an option for me. I speak up for worker rights and such at my jobs because I know that if I piss off the wrong person by doing that and manage to get fired it's not the end of the world for me. I probably will not end up homeless and/or starving because last option for me, my parents still exist as middle class suburbanites and they won't let me starve, and even though, as of late things aren't as easy and great as they were for me, I'm still nowhere near the bottom of the barrel. I didn't start from the bottom; hopefully I won't hit that either.

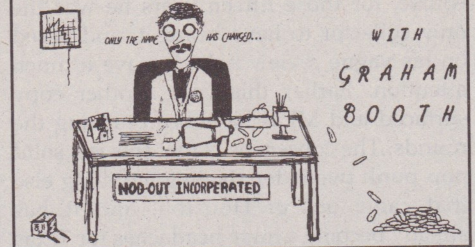
However, for poor people from working-class backgrounds the bottom is either right there or really close. Barely surviving from paycheck to paycheck doesn't create an environment conducive to getting a better education and using that education to rise up. On top of that trapped-ness of having little or no option for a better education, the constant fear of getting fired, and the monthly stress of can I pay for rent AND bills? Actually getting a higher-ranking job seems increasingly impossible. Most of these positions are filled by non-paid interns or friends or whatever, (this is just my personal experience, not scientific data or something) so if you're outside of that club, your friend can't get you that job, the only way in is through working for free (internship), and when you're already living paycheck to paycheck how are you going to find the time to work for free? I mean, volunteerism in general is vital, and those who can should, and not to say that interns are undeserving or that interning is stupid, but it's unfair when the expectation is that to get this job you have to work for free for a while.

Do I even have to say how lame it is? For some there are little to no options. That's incredibly fucked up, I mean, everyone should have the right and have the ability to achieve whatever they want, and to be denied those options is basically inhumane. I'm not trying to say service jobs are shit, or something to look down upon, they're just shitty places to be and are easy to get trapped in. It's pretty disgusting that the public treats the people that are serving them so horribly, looking down on them, like they are objects. So, what it comes down to is not taking advantage of the options I'm lucky to have seems stupid and kind of weirdly arrogant to me. So fuck it, I'm taking the office job, and maybe I'll even go back to school.

And to end on a more positive work related note, can I just say how fucking good Ariel Awesomes column on the work you do because you want to (volunteer stuff) and the work you do because you have to (money stuff) was? So inspiring!

Anyways, party with me punker!
marissa@punkymagic.com

ROCKET TO NOWHERE



I was so rudely awoken this morning by the *brrring* of a text message from an old friend. It was a bit out of character for him, as I don't normally get texts, so I figured it must be something big. "Just scored an amazing collection that would make you cry" condition related.

I called him back immediately; I had to know the dish. He's in Houston, Texas where we first met while I was attending grad school at Rice University. He was a friend of a record-collecting classmate. Unfortunately, I didn't meet him until about three months before I moved, since then we have become good friends in the meantime. Anyway, we had a couple opportunities to nerd out, retelling Houston record hunting stories.

One of the biggest inside jokes for Houston collectors is the monthly Houston Record Show at the Ramada Inn on I-10. It's always pretty much a waste of time, but since there's not much else to do on Sunday mornings, all of us went every month. Trying to look for punk records was a total joke. In three years of shopping, the only punk records I can remember coming up with were the CHROME *Alien Soundtracks* and *Half Machine Lip Moves* LPs and a *PEACE* compilation LP with the booklet. My best find ever was a rare Texas private metal LP by HAMMERWITCH—great news for the day, but hardly a payoff for three years of work. And there were almost never any 7" records. Depressing stuff.

You can imagine my surprise when I got my friend on the phone—calling from outside the Houston Record Show in the Ramada Inn Lobby. He'd just bought a long box of 45s from a crusty old psych dealer for $80. He couldn't remember all the specifics, but he said there were about 150 records including some old local ones and named off a few. When I heard the words THE STAINS I couldn't believe what I was hearing. There was one caveat, a lot of them were missing sleeves. *And* any of the records with small holes were literally whittled out into a crude big hole to fit a 45 adapter. Sounds like the collection of a very disturbed punk rocker! He promised to send a full list later in the day.

Well I've got the list here and it's pretty amazing. One of the coolest things is that it contains a wide array of local and regional Texas releases from the '77-'82 punk era. Texas, and especially Houston, remains under the radar for most collectors, and there are plenty of records that, in my opinion, haven't yet received their due. What follows is a rundown of the list with brief descriptions added since even longtime collectors are unfamiliar with some of them. You can find scans of most of the sleeves on the excellent collectorscum.com online punk discography.

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First up, THE RALPHS "Teddy Boy b/w Mutating Man" (VVV). It's no surprise there would be a VVV single here. VVV was the main punk label in Dallas/Fort Worth with the most releases of any Texas independent label. THE RALPHS have recently gotten their time in the spotlight on the heels of their *Zeros, No Ones* LP (Existential Vacuum) reissue. The VVV single is pretty good synth/punk wave with THE RALPHS keyboard driven sound—although their punk career highs are contained on two different and impossibly rare unreleased acetates. Thankfully it's all on the reissue!

Next one is for all you hardcore fans, Texas style: DOOMSDAY MASSACRE *Wake Up or Melt Down* EP (CIA). Yes, Texas had a few early-'80s hardcore records, and this is one of the best and dirtiest. Being from Houston it remains almost totally ignored, even with its DISCHARGE inspired black and white cover. CIA was Houston's indie label equivalent to VVV, and most of you are already familiar with their label-mates REALLY RED.

TOXIN III *I Rock I Ran* EP (Vinyl Solution) is next. No, this isn't a Texas record. TOXIN III was from New Orleans, and this classic slab of punk rock was featured on a *Killed By Death* compilation. More recently TOXIN III got the reissue treatment on the Hyped 2 Death CD label. I mention this record because the New Orleans scene was almost an extension of the Texas one with lots of back and forth between them. Louisiana records regularly turn up all around Texas.

Now, some power pop with the EXPLO-

SIVES *A Girl Like You* (Black Hole). THE EXPLOSIVES records are pretty common around Texas, and in general not so highly regarded. *A Girl Like You* happens to be their best, and is a solid, though not really punk, Texas power pop single. Rave Up Records in Italy reissued all their stuff on an LP a couple years back, though it's probably only necessary for power pop completists.

I couldn't believe my eyes reading this one—INANIMATE OBJECTS five-song EP on Freeway. Here's a Houston record that's been ignored for far too long. Maybe it's because of their very early compilation appearance, almost fifteen years ago on the *Bloodstains Across Texas* compilation? Maybe it's because their records almost never come up for sale? Who knows? All I can say is this is one solid Texas punk record, with five songs no less! A few years back there were rumors abound of a band manager wielding a long lost stash of records, but nothing has been heard since.

A San Antonio record up next—MYSTERY DATES five-song EP on Beehive, and the MYSTERY DATES first. This is a pretty good Texas pop punk EP, and it's not too hard to track down. The best MYSTERY DATES material was never released originally, and finally came out on another essential Existential Vacuum release as a 7" EP. The other release on the Beehive label was the VAMPS double 7", also worth picking up if it's cheap.

Another forgotten Houston punk obscurity, THE RECIPIENTS "Lunatic b/w Constitution" (PR). "Lunatic" is the winner, a stupid and highly repetitive (infectious?) pop punk track. This was slated to come out on a compilation that never made it past the test pressing stage and remains unheard by most. Nothing earth shattering, but a must-have for any serious Texas punk collector.

DEPROGRAMMER "Instant Passion b/w 8081" (At Last)—from Dallas, DEPROGRAMMER is probably best-known for their LP on California's Mystic label. They moved to LA for the record deal. The pop punk "Instant Passion" is arguably their best moment, although none of it is particularly mind-blowing. DEPROGRAMMER's much more rare debut single *Discipline + 3* (At Last) is pretty bad and should be avoided.

More weak stuff with the SKUNKS "What Do You Want b/w The Racket" (Skunks). Austin's SKUNKS recorded one of the most memorable Texas punk singles, "Earthquake Shake b/w Can't Get Loose." Their second release, a 7" double pack has its moments, as does their first self-titled LP with the black and white cover. By the time they got to this single and the purple album they had wimped out substantially, and not many people I know can tolerate 'em.

A relatively new discovery is the 45 by SPIES called "Bad Girl b/w My Radio" (Giant Squid). This obscure Houston record has been known for many years thanks to one collector who found a copy at a Denver Record Show around fifteen years ago. Of course, for those fifteen years he was the only collector to have heard it, and based on his vague review nobody gave it much attention. Earlier this year another copy surfaced and MP3s have been making the rounds. The consensus is that this is a solid pop punk two-sider rivaling anything else that came out of Houston, and it has already become a huge headaches for Texas punk collectors.

Lots more pop punk here from THE RATTLECATS on their 45 "Run My Life b/w Back To Life" (Worlach). Austin's RATTLECATS recorded one obscure and excellent pop punk *or* power pop single, depending on your political orientation. Infectious stuff that ended up on one of Hyped 2 Death's *Teenline* compilation CDs. As a 7" this remains a tough pull, so better start digging.

Alson on the list was Houston punk legends LEGIONAIRE'S DISEASE BAND "Rather See You Dead b/w Downtown" (Disease Unlimited / Lunar Lab). This is another once heralded, now forgotten Texas punk gem from the *Bloodstains Across Texas* compilation. If you are into crazy drunken hicks yelling about how much they hate you, then this is your dream single. Two pressings, with the Disease Unlimited one being the pressing of choice for Collector Scum everywhere. Great stuff—there is also live video show footage floating around!

A San Francisco release with a Texas connection (?)…the FUCK UPS EP on Fowl. Fans of LEGIONAIRE'S DISEASE BAND will know of their second 7" on San Francisco's Fowl label after the band moved to the west coast. Not sure how THE FUCK UPS 7" got to Texas, but I'm sure there's a story there.

Legendary Austin debut from THE OFFENDERS with their 45 "Lost Cause b/w Rockin The Town" (Suffering Sounds). Great record from one of Texas' most consistent bands, THE OFFENDERS. Their sound peaked a bit later on 1983's *We Must Rebel* LP (R Radical), but this one's no slouch and remains an essential piece of the early Texas Punk puzzle.

Next we have THE HASKELLS with "Magazine Girls b/w Pop Art" on Spotless. Very Rare Power pop, and as far as power pop records go there are far better ones out there. It's the completists of the world that sweat THE HASKELLS, as their lone single is one of the toughest to track down. Must be from Houston, I can still remember my surprise at pulling their even rarer (and worse) 12" out of a thrift store stack at the Salvation Army on Bissonet.

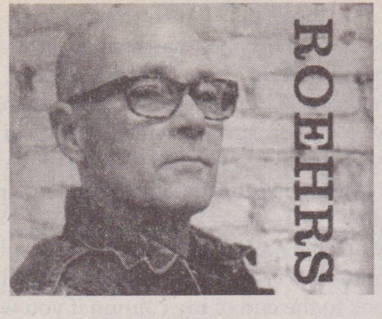
THE DEGENERATES *Fallout* EP (Hit & Run) is great Houston punk core. how can you go wrong with song titles like "Skid Row Kid" or "Scungy Girl"? A rare one, and good enough that I cannot understand why this record remains almost totally overlooked.

The Bad news is that everything above this point in the list was found missing its original picture sleeve. A major mellow-harshing for sure, but really who could complain? The good news? The following two records still had their original picture sleeves…

BOBBY SOXX "Learn to hate in the '80s b/w Scavenger of Death" (VVV) is a Texas punk classic. This record has a unique, almost metal, dirge punk sound that always catches first-time listeners off guard. But try as you might to move along, Bobby's menacing snarl was already ingrained by the third (or fourth? or fifth?!) *"Learn to hate in the eighhhhhtieeeeeeeeees."* An $80 BOBBY SOXX single would make anyone's day.

Annnnd the winner is…THE CRINGE *Spit On Your Grave* EP (Cringe). An even cruder punker from Texas, THE CRINGE from Dallas released their painfully rare 7" in 1981, and the jury has been out on it ever since. Like BOBBY SOXX it has an almost metal sound, with the added bonus of girl singer Suzy. One track barely ended up on a Killed By Death compilation, and Existential Vacuum produced a straight reissue with an alternate sleeve way back in 1991. Not for everyone, but a must have for true believers!

That brings us to the end of the list. An unexpected revelation as my friend was sorting through the contents of the box, which included Tejano 45s, '60s/'70s rock and pop standards, and various other styles… He realized that the box was full of the ex-contents of a...oh man, you'll never guess...a Jukebox! Suddenly it all makes sense—the crudely enlarged spindle holes, the missing picture sleeves... My friend had just purchased the contents of THE BEST PUNK ROCK JUKEBOX EVER! Have you ever even heard of that?! *Unbelievable*!!! Until next month...



ROEHRS

WAR ALL THE TIME

Yes! You punks and skins are in luck! The SF/Bay Area's infamous NEVER HEALED has released thirteen songs of aural devastation! With Casey on vocals (who is also in LOOK BACK AND LAUGH), these East Bay punks obliterate everything in their path!! The guitars cut a wide swath across your skull! You feel the bass and drums coming up strong on your blind side and then… Fuck!! You hit the dirt face first! NEVER HEALED unleashes the beast on song number one "Forever Never Ends." This shit starts the adrenalin flowing in earnest on song two. "Ruins" slows the tempo down a touch as you segue into "Lonely Crawls." This hard-edged song prepares you for "Wind And Smoke." Check out these lyrics: "Shrines of yesterday / Crosses stand like mountains / Testaments of death and destruction / The dead walk and speak forever." Yes sir! NEVER HEALED storms through "Waits To Destroy" and "Where The Crosses Grow," "We Are Ruins" and finally arrives at "Far We Fall." A full-scale brain attack! The music on this demon is a chunk of black-hearted punk – the music builds up in a crazed sort of furor. Fuck!! This band will grab you by the throat and throttle your ass! The next fistful of venomous songs will disturb you safety punks! Next NEVER HEALED slam into "The March." This tough song gives you hasty preparation for "War All The Time." This song is a fucking punk masterpiece! You better hold onto your socks you fucks! We finish off this brutal CD with "Untitled I," "Untitled II" and a brilliant cover of "No One," originally performed by INTEGRITY. Fuck! NEVER HEALED has clearly staked out their corner of the violent thrash contingent! Order your NEVER HEALED CD from Parts Unknown Records, www.partsunknownrecords.com.

OK you European punk fans! NARSKAAK, a prominent German punk band from the '90s is back with a bang! The new 7" EP on Thought Crime Records out of Berlin is called *Prasina* and it will destroy you motherfuckers! The six-song bomb-blast is outfitted with deep/gruff vocals, great guitar chugging and a heavy-duty bass and drum fuselage! NARSAAK creates a disturbing beast with hypnotic rhythms, menacing guitar parts and vocals that guarantee your extreme discomfort! A good comparison would be Sammy Winston's current vehicle GRACE ALLEY from the San Francisco/Bay Area. This black music will not cheer you up. NARSAAK's mission is clearly not to "brighten your day." There is a bleak, dark undercurrent right below the surface of this finely crafted slice of gloom. This release will inspire you to seek out the earlier NARSAAK output. For your copy of the *Prasina* EP by NARSAAK contact Thought Crime Records at Muskauer Str. 19, 10997 Berlin, Germany. Or contact NARSAAK directly c/o Dzini/Lopin, Bismarck Str. 65, 64293 Damstadt, Germany, www.narsaak.de.

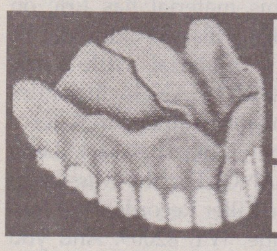
Fuck! This month you lucky cretins get a ferocious new EP from Finnish thrashers OMAISUU VAHINKO!! The new six song EP from Ratbit Records/Roku Records is entitled *Sotaa Maailmaa Vastaan*. All the lyrics inside the sleeve are in OMAISUU VAHINKO's native Finnish language and this listener is convinced that these punks are pissed! The front of the sleeve features a drawing of a punk with CRUCIFIX painted on his leather jacket. This spiked-hair neer-do-well is preparing to throw a lit molotov cocktail at the enemy. Do you get the drift? This frantic hardcore will fucking rip your gonads off! The excellent punk guitar riffs have the fierce momentum that could cause you to fucking break everything in the bar! This is a fucking great EP! Contact Roku Records: PL148, 96101 Rovaniem1, Finland, moguli@rokurecords.com. Or contact Ratbite at ratbiterecords@gmail.com.

Fuck! You fucks have read about the attributes of Hattiesburg, Mississippi's favorite sons BEFORE I HANG from me before!! Chris, Walt and their cohorts stole the show on the first night of the ANTiSEEN Twenty-fifth Anniversary in Charlotte, North Carolina this year!! If you reach back six months you encounter the raging BEFORE I HANG CD entitled *Mississippi* on Zodiac Killer Records. This shit just gets more manic as the songs unfold. You are treated to three stunning southern scum rock blasts "Put U Out Of My Misery," "Pleased Me The Most" and "More Fun." Then you hit the brick wall BEFORE I HANG number "Rock'n'Roll Tragedy." This shit will make the short hairs on your neck stand up! There will be no turning back from this scorching rock 'n' roll!! In "Rock'n'Roll Tragedy" the band sings: "There will be no winners in this game" – this is devastating rock 'n' roll of the highest order! Walt plays guitar as if possessed by Satan! You will crash through "Blow Up The World" where BEFORE I HANG sings: "I hate everybody / I hate dogs with rabies, roaches, rats / and mothers with their babies." There's some positive sentiment for you fucks! Next up is "Kiss My Southern Ass" with a true blue pride in BEFORE I HANG's native Mississippi! On the heels of "Kiss My Southern Ass" you wallow in the glory of "Dixie Pig." This fine anthem celebrates the rewards of working hard in the day, and the accolades of the triumvirate—drink, fight, fuck—your goals for the evening! Those are the fruits of your labors! After you hear "Targets" you get the tunes "Upfront" and "Freonhead." We finish off in fine style with "(Takin' It To) The Pawnshop." This entire *Mississippi* CD is mandatory listening for you Confederacy Of Scum fans! This material has Eric on vocals and he holds up his end of the job! Be prepared for new material with Chris singing soon! BEFORE I HANG will continue to grow as a major southern rock force that will shrivel your Yankee ball sack! Long live BEFORE I HANG! For the *Mississippi* CD contact: Zodiac Killer Records, 1733 Iron Mtn. Rd., Cheyenne, WY, 82009. And you punks keep your eyes peeled because Zodiac Killer Records will be bringing you new product by THE DWARVES, THE CANDY SNATCHERS,THE UTAH COUNTY SWILLERS, and more in the near future.

Yes sir! JEFF DAHL has recaptured some of his notorious rock 'n' roll venom with his new CD *Back To Monkey City*. The current Steel Cage Records product illustrates how important this rocker is to the history of punk rock and the future of straight ahead rock!!! The title song *Back To Monkey City* is a fitting introduction to the new LP with a furious rhythm and rock momentum that will grab you by the throat! Mr. Dahl and company proceed to slow down with song two "Salvation, Temptation And Sin" and you get way down in the groove. Song three is another up-tempo garage attack! "I'm A Mess" has all the nastiness you would expect from a man that has been performing in the rock wars for thirty years! Tune number four winds you up once again with "Dense Pac." This shit will make you uncomfortable immediately! That's Jeff Dahl rock 'n 'roll strength for you! Track number five is called "All My Favorite Ramones Are Dead." Damn if it doesn't sound like a RAMONES song!! Number six is a barn-burning rocker that the DEVIL-DOGS in their prime could have written! "I Ain't No Rattlesnake" is a good barroom rocker that many young bands wish they could conjure up! We slide through a bluesy

"Suits My Mood" and arrive at a true American balls-out rocker called "Three Star Drag." You can distill your STOOGES and DEAD BOYS riffs down and you are left with the pure unadulterated rock 'n' roll of Mr. JEFF DAHL. Song number nine is a heart-broken song of disappointed love called "Rat's Ass." It would appear that the male protagonist got kicked to the curb in this relationship! This slow lament moves on to the final cut: "This Ain't No Funhouse Baby." This full-blown rock 'n' roll extravaganza utilizes every instrument in the studio! Very Good!! Order your copy of this new American rock 'n' roll anthems by JEFF DAHL, *Back To Monkey City* CD from Steel Cage Records, PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125, www.steelcagerecords.com

Until next month… See you fucks at the bar!



NOTHING EVER LASTS

CISSIE

I've been fighting off writing this column all day. And to further my descent into procrastination I've decided to simultaneously work on my year-end top ten. But I'm not gonna go on that tangent just yet. We've got big plans in the next issue to set the next hype machine in motion. Instead I'll give ya an ear full on all the non-new records that have made my bedroom their home this year.

I'm no scumpit dweller. I do all right finding a deal every now and then and sometimes I decide to blow half a paycheck on one record (*Where's My Towel* doesn't come easy, neither do Lama LPs), but I've lost the energy to bother looking daily. I used to map out a different route every day of the week, making sure to hit the good spots more than once. Justin and I used to drive over 100 miles to go to a record store in Western Mass and sometimes we'd leave empty handed. Old age has killed the urge to frenziedly hunt for records that I want. Luckily, Martika's Boutique (read Martin's sell box) isn't far away, and my money has found its way into Martin's wallet a few times this year. For some reason, I haven't stepped foot in Street Light or Rasputin's since I've moved to San Francisco, and the only reason I go to Amoeba regularly is because I work there. And what better to do on my breaks than comb the bins. It beats hanging out on Haight Street. I'd rather get sick from the dust fumes of an old record than from the air born phlegm of one of the Haight locals.

Although I tend to think I haven't had any luck at Amoeba, I realize every time that I look through my records that I've done well scouring the bins there. The clearance section has yielded a Chills *Rolling Moon* 7", Bush Tetras *Too Many Creeps* 7", Slapshot's first 7", Monoshock's *Primitive Zippo* 7" (overlooked and awesome SF garage punk), an original press of Radio Birdman's *Radios Appear* LP, and the *Trails of Slime* LP by old SF hardcore band the Sluglords (one of the songs has a small drop of glue, or something, on it).

The cover on the Radio Birdman is pretty beat, but I'm of the opinion that old records like this are made for abuse. Every scratch and dust particle serves a purpose in making the listening process a little more challenging. This is a good thing. My copy of *Kings of Punk* is on Pusmort, but it has a cover that looks as if someone had a drug picnic on top of it. That's appropriate, as far as I can tell. My Germs *GI* LP is mangled—its surface has the appearance of a needle destroyer, but somehow it doesn't skip once. Is it weird that I'm proud of this?

Enough of that—in general the clearance bins require a lot of patience because you have to look through endless stacks of crap to get the good stuff, so I tend to stick to the new arrivals, the 7" bins, and the rock and punk sections. For a while my best "rare" find was Chain of Strength's *What Holds Us Apart* 7" for $2. I sold my old copy of it on eBay several years ago when I was saving money to move to Austin and I've wanted it back since. I also stupidly sold my Brotherhood *Fuck Racism* and my Turning Point 7". Oh well. Other cool "scores" that I've found at Amoeba this year include Kina's first LP, *Irreale Realta*. This is a great and overlooked old Italian hardcore LP, that's not quite as irreverent as CCM, Negazione, Wretched, and the like. Kina tempers the traditional Italian hardcore style with a bit of Hüsker Dü type melodies, but they're still pretty frantic and classic sounding. I found *For Almost Ever* by Cleveland's best answer to power pop, the Mice, for $2.99 and the same price tag graced *I Kräftans Klor* by Sweden's Raped Teenagers. I got the Campingsex reissue on VOD, Brainbombs *Obey* LP, the *Xpressway Pile=Up* compilation, a couple of Verlaines LPs, and 7"s by Mo-Dettes, Units, Ignition, Fire Engines, and Leatherface. I also picked up extras of the Crossed Out/Dropdead split 5", Proletariat *Indifference* LP (their best stuff, in my opinion), Agnostic Front *Vicitm In Pain* on Combat Core (still need the Ratcage version), and the first 100 Flowers 12". For those that haven't heard 'em, 100 Flowers is the band that formed after the Urinals broke up. You can hear a bit of the Urinals in 100 Flowers sound, but they have fully formed, simple, smart pop songs. They're a bit like a west coast Wire or maybe even Mission of Burma with a little less pretension.

All of the stuff that I got at Amoeba had "nice" prices and I've saved the best for last, so look to the end of my column if you want to read about my biggest Amoeba score, but now it's time to talk about excess. I did buy a few things on eBay this year, but nothing too crazy. All of the big records have gotten too expensive for me. I'd like to have a complete 1981 Dischord 7"s collection, all of the early Touch and Go and X-Claim! records, Anti Cimex, Headcleaners, Svart Framtid, Koro, Deep Wound, Comes, Swankys, and the like, but most of that shit is too expensive. Maybe one day I'll explore the pricier world of collecting, but not now. This year I went light on eBay spending and the records that I got are totally random. I got 7"s by Armia, Nighters, Underdogs, October Days, and Speed and for LPs I bought *Go Go Stalin*, *Mushi*, and *Stop Jap* by the Stalin, Dezerter *Kolaboracja II*, Sick Things *The Sounds of Silence*, an Italian press of *Alien Soundtracks* by Chrome, and *The New Hope* compilation.

New Hope is one of the finest early-'80s locals only comps and features all of Cleveland's best including the Guns, Spike In Vain, Agitated, and Zero Defex. Speed has been previously hyped by Dave Hyde in one of his '90s scumpits on *Terminal Boredom*. It's an amphetamine-feuled, teenage mod punk classic. It will have you believing that it came out in 1978, but it was released in the '90s. The vocals are gloriously androgynous and all three songs are hits. October Days is still a total mystery to me. They are from Connecticut and their 7" was released in 1981, but there is no information in the record whatsoever—no lyrics, names of members, thanks list, or anything. It's apparent that October Days drew most of their influence from the Wipers, and they do the sound justice. "West Coast" has that surf-gone-doom-pop feel down pat, breathy vocals and all. I still need the October Days 12"EP... Italy's Nighters put out a relatively obscure melodic punk record. Martin found a copy of this last year and played it for me and I immediately decided I needed it. It's tough sing-a-long punk with strong pop sensibilities, big choruses, catchy solos, and all that. It's very similar to the Klaxon EP (which I *need*) for those familiar with them. And the last band that I'm gonna go on about, for now, is Sick Things. They were from Australia and featured members that went on to Venom P. Stinger and the Dirty Three. The music on *Sounds of Silence* is blown out, primitive pre-hardcore punk that's very Australian with its noisy Stooges-like guitar freakouts. Imagine some disturbed speed sniffers, blessed with the ability to write good songs but obsessed with making a racket and taking pills, given cabinets with speakers that have been repeatedly stabbed with pick axes. This LP was released in '89, and it collects material recorded by the band in '80 and '81.

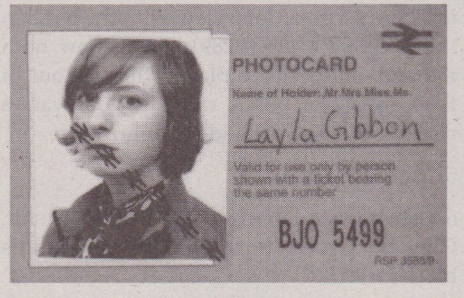
I've mentioned Martin's boutique. It's a little place that a lot of us like to venture into every now and then, when Martin graciously goes through his records and picks out the doubles or decides to slim down his boxes. This year I've spent more money there in single visits then anywhere else. I've picked up a Bum Kon *Drunken Sex Sucks* 7", the Sieg Heil *First Demo Tracks 1984* LP (insane Japanese hardcore that obviously gave Lebenden Toten spiritual guidance), Colera *Tente Mudar O Amanhã* LP, Peaceful Protest one-sided 7" (more insane Japanese hardcore), and the *Schiavi Nella Citta Piu Libera Del Mondo* comp 7". The comp has eight furiously inept songs by four Italian hardcore bands, and it's on Attack Records, which means the packaging is beautiful.

I bought one record from the Discourage list this year: F.U.'s *My America* on X-Claim! I traded my Classy Records press with the lightning bolt cover to my roommate Scott for the first Chronic Disorder LP (regular blue and black cover), which I fawned over in one of my early columns. I also traded an Infest/PHC 8" flexi to Justin for the Sick Pleasure 7", and I bought Asta Kask's *Plikten Framför Allt* 7" from Randy a couple weeks ago.

Oh yeah, one last thing... A few days after Christmas I had the find of a lifetime. I'd almost given up looking at records in Amoeba for the day, but decided to see what was going on with the "S" section. I was hurriedly and apathetically flipping through when I came across a familiar bright blue record cover with a contrasted photo of a self-assured punk girl in front of a brick wall. "No fucking way." It was the Screaming Sneakers *Marching Orders* 12" with a $2.99 price tag! It's my biggest score, beating my $3 Mecht Mensch 7" that I got at Record Hog in Somerville in '99. And what a great record! One of the best early-'80s pop punk records. "Violent Days" is such a classic and anthemic song, and it's got a strangely upbeat sound for the dark subject matter. It's kind of bizarre that singer Lisa Nash sounds happy when she exclaims that she know the future "will be violent anyway." The next song, "Grin and Bear," has a dark sound to match the bleak lyrics and "I Can't Help It" is a love song originally penned by the Reactions. The final track "Reflections" has a stark, gloomy feel with a triumphant chorus. All of the songs are great '80s pop-laced punk with a dark side. Perfect.

***

So I got a couple things wrong in my Kriegshög rant last month that I feel I should correct. Heartfirst's email address is stuckinthe80s@heartfirst.net and the Kriegshög/Deathtribe split was released on In Crust We Thrash and not Hardcore Survives. Sorry for my disinformation and poor investigating...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Off the Hook

Sitting in my room a million miles from anyone I am related to; Israel is decimating the Gaza strip, someone on eBay has bid up a Fingers 7" to five thousand dollars with five days to go. Meanwhile in the land of the brave, I just ate a burrito and am listening to the new Lebenden Toten LP. The part in "Youth of America" when Greg Sage says, "I don't wanna be born here again / Do you wanna be born here again / This ain't no existence..." Consumption doesn't pay when you have nothing to say at two in the morning. Nothing left to buy so why even go to work. The world is about to end and it's gonna take us out with it. People losing their jobs and living in car park communities, millionaires not being able to afford Lear jets, aging dowager aunts being cheated out of their retirement funds by Ponzi schemists, Pakistani truck drivers being killed by militants on the Khyber Pass because the US doesn't provide security for them once they've delivered their goods to the army bases. Who is "us" anyway? People who didn't go to grad school that work shitty minimum wage jobs? People with expensive educations making value judgments on those without? The mythical private liberal arts colleges and Ivy League schools where rich girls are formed, and those there on scholarships learn to exclude previous life experiences or to form combative identities based on said experiences... The worst. I spent Xmas making cookies and listening to the Eskorbuto song "Ha llegado el Momento (el fin)" over and over. Posh enough for you? Does one ever get over class resentment? Over the fact that grad school or even university isn't a given in the world I come from? The parents that pay the bills. Doomed till the grave to minimum wage?

So say a sneaker company gives your band free shoes a few times a month, and maybe when you played a record release show for your LP a beer company sponsored the night, and shit, you don't make any money at your 'real' job, so fuck it right? I mean that's a kind of freeganism (barf!) and hey—you're totally getting free shit from corporations, sticking it to the man and so forth. The total joy of having to explain why *MRR* doesn't review bands on, or distributed by, major labels, and why MTV also negates your band. Mostly to people that should know better. It's strange to exist in a time where careerist musicians who wanna make it also want the "credibility" of DIY and/or being in *MRR*. A weird sense of deja-vu—maybe it's the fact that grunge is back? If your band has a publicist and plays South by Southwest shows sponsored by Levis jeans why do you need *MRR*? Something that does not exist to provide cred for bands on their way up to the flaccid indie circuit—it's for bands and people and scenes that exist outside of that world, for the kids by the kids. Not for bands looking for fans, that ultimately wanna play Clear Channel owned venues. That sounds like that part in *Decline*... where the kid talks about The Cramps coming to town and charging a million dollars and only playing over 21 venues only so the punks can't go. It's hard to talk about shit like this without sounding like a cardboard cut out punk-rocker™ and maybe it's because the generation after mine came of age in an era that wasn't defined by the Dischord ethic. More to come on this fascinating subject in the future, times a million.

When the idea of something takes the place of anything actually happening, like No Age talking about "DIY" culture on MTV, like KBD hardcore bonzer record speculation, another coffee table about punk rock ephemera, your memories, your talismans, a conversation you had. Like worrying about the lack of ideals in the punk community when children are scrambling for the scraps of corn that drop off the back of delivery trucks in famine ridden Zimbabwe. As if bemoaning the fact that the punks would rather discuss broken Koro 7"s and figure out how to perfectly mimic

Power of Expression means anything in the face of total global catastrophe. It's like the stereotype of parents telling their kids they gotta eat—think of the starving children and so forth, as though the starving children will be affected at all by that days meatloaf consumption, or lack of. As if the kid will be affected by the starving children, an idea, an impossibility in the face of being chauffeured to school in an SUV, and gallon size mayonnaise jars and televisions bigger than windscreen windows.

* * *

All I Gotta Say Is the Kids Don't Care

1. There's an all-girl Dead Moon cover band in town called Dead Poon. Not sure what I think about that.

2. Héctor of Spanish punk band Otan did the cover this month, and when we got the proof back from the printer we suddenly realized that it was highly unlikely that any prison readers would actually get copies of the magazine as a result of said cover. So we've designed a special, ltd. edition prisoner only cover for this month, which you will only see if you are currently serving time. We often get the magazine sent back to us, returned to sender from prisons for the most random reasons—one example being the issue with the Carbonas on the cover. They're holding skateboards and looking dirty and goofy, one of them wearing a beret and a striped shirt—that was rejected by an Orange County jail for featuring 'gang signs.'

3. The Embarrassment LP for when you're in the mood for some tetchy sounding Midwestern art punk.

4. Paco is reissuing the Ultimo Resorte discography. If you are in the mood for circa '79 desperate sounding Spanish punk with the best lady vocals you should send off for it! There's a great interview with the band in the June '07 *MRR* (#289) and I know both me and Golnar have played the shit out of their music on *MRR* radio if you wanna check it out. www.lavidaesunmus.com

5. Moss Icon demo

6. Lebenden Toten – *Near Dark* LP. Holy shit. Chanel's voice. Someone interview this band for *MRR*!

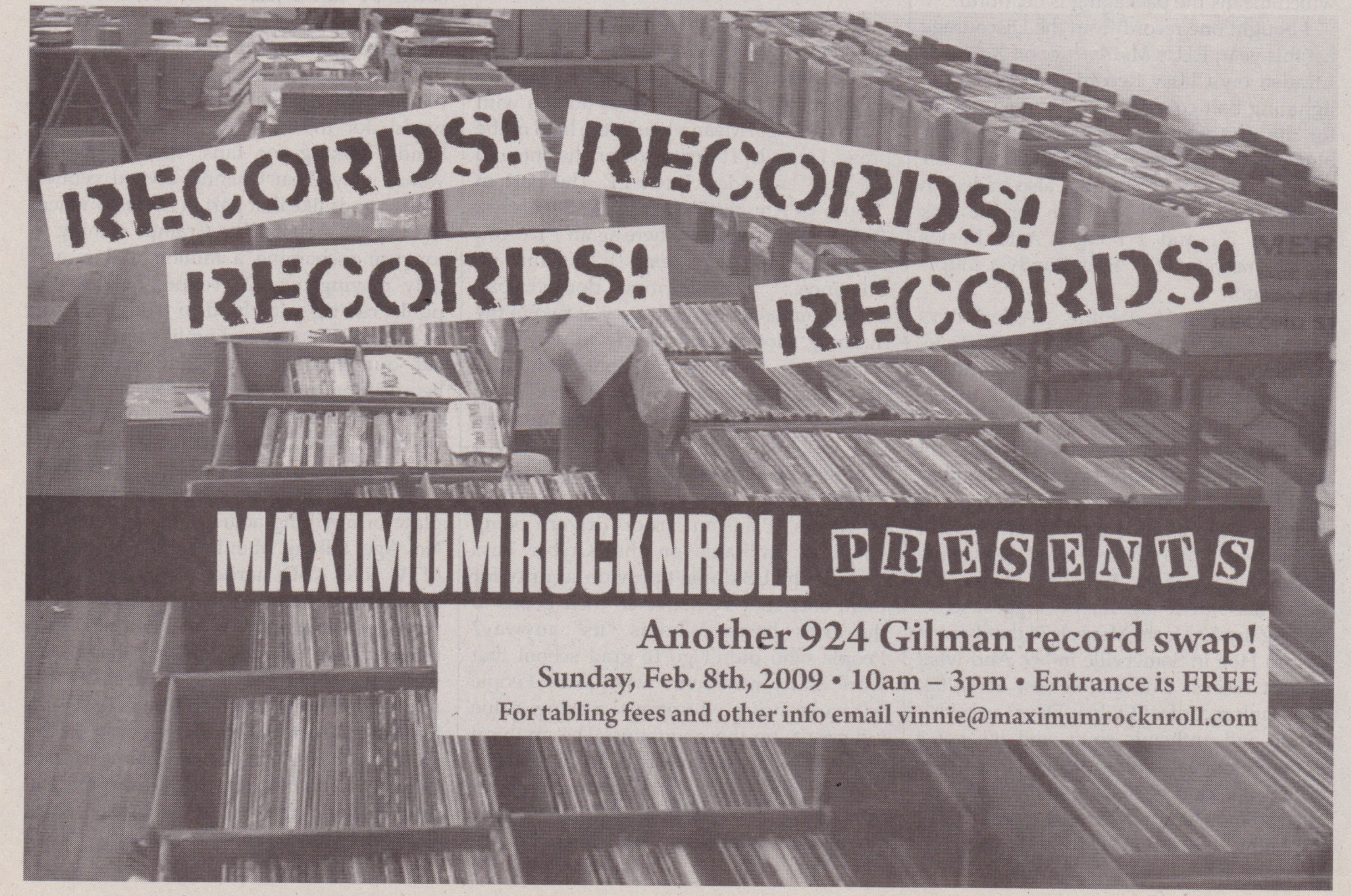
7. Trying to figure out if I still like Mika Miko, maybe I'll have to reserve judgment until the LP comes out, but the vocals and feel of that stupid Sub Pop members (or eBay only) 7" were not quite it for me… Not sure what the difference is.

8. Arguing with Hubbs about the drums on *Is This My World?* He says it's like having Yngwe Malmsteen in a hardcore band, in short a virtuoso who ruins the band. I say: Listen to that record! Undeniable.

9. *Finnish Spunk* LP

10. whatwewantisfree.blogspot.com my columns on thee web.

Layla at maximumrocknroll.com is the email at which I can be reached—insert lousy correspondent disclaimer.



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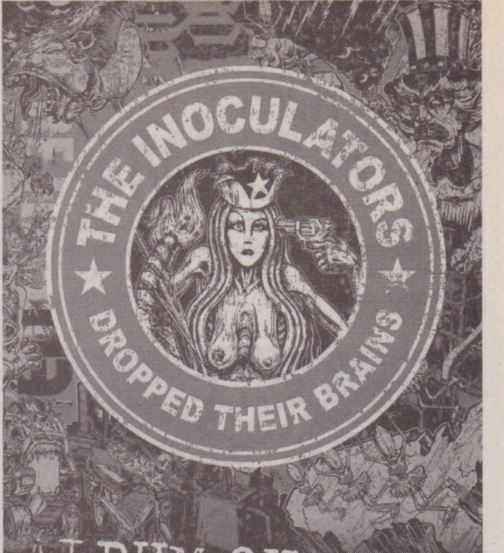
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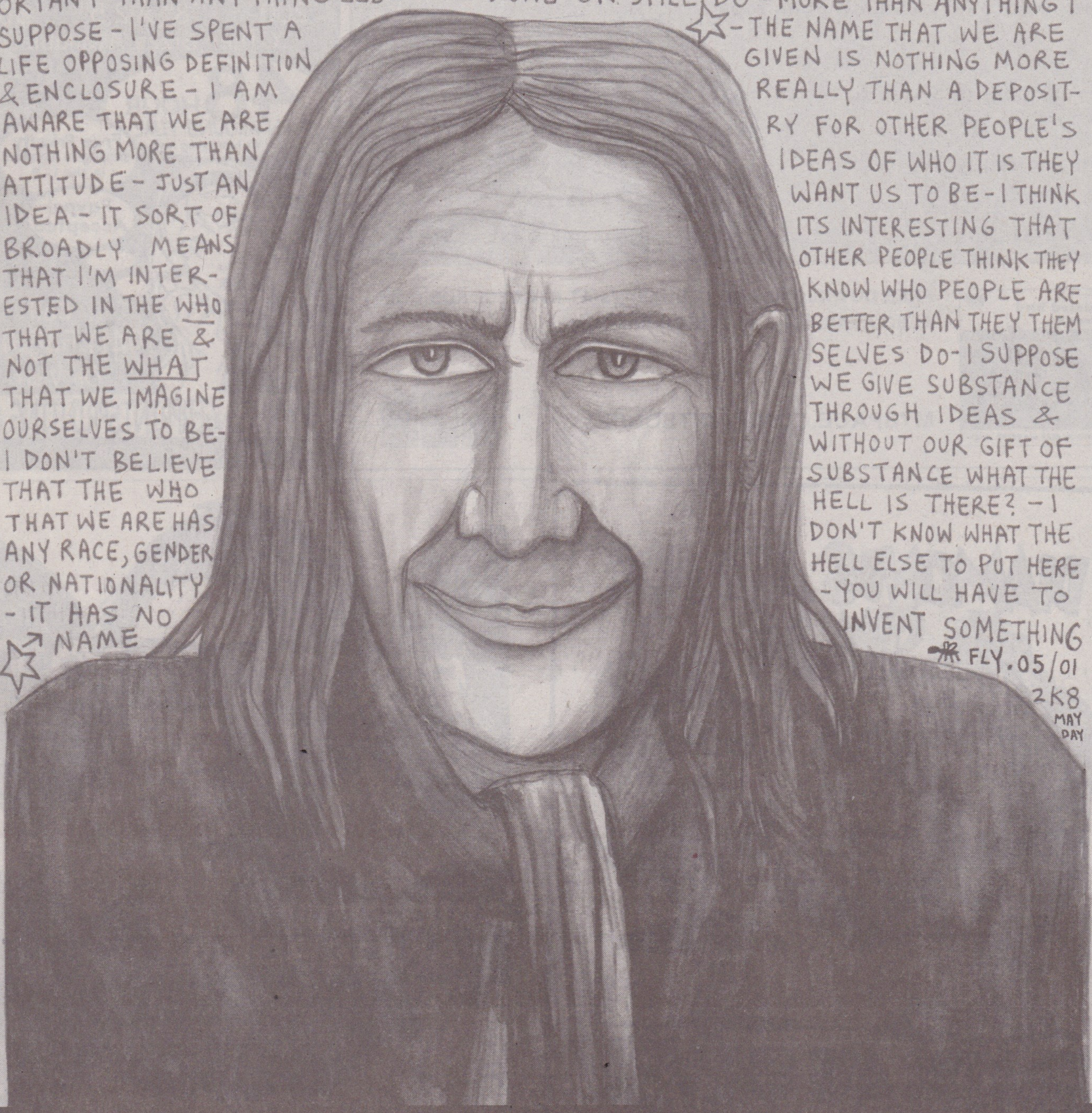
PEOPS

I WAS BORN IN LONDON DURING THE BLITZ SO I SPENT MOST OF MY TIME UNDER A LARGE WOODEN TABLE - I DIDN'T MEET MY DAD UNTIL I WAS ABOUT 3 BECAUSE HE WAS OFF FIGHTING IN THE WAR - I SUPPOSE IT WAS SORT OF A BEGINNING & AN END - OBVIOUSLY IF YOU WERE IN EUROPE A NEW WORLD HAD TO BE BUILT BECAUSE MUCH OF THE OLD WORLD HAD BEEN DESTROYED & I THINK THAT NATURALLY LED TO AN AGE OF DISSENT - SO I THINK I WAS A NATURAL BORN BOLSHY - ANYONE WHO HAD LEFTIST OR RADICAL TENDANCIES WOULD BE ATTACKED AS BEING BOLSHY (BOLSHEVIK) - TO ME NOTHINGS BEEN EXTRAORDINARY IN MY LIFE - DISSENT IS NATURAL TO ME & TAKES NO EFFORT - EVERY THING JUST SEEMS PATENTLY WRONG FROM THE START - IT'S NOT THAT I COULDN'T CONFORM - I JUST DIDN'T - SO SOMETHING LIKE CRASS IS NO MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT THAN ANYTHING ELSE I'VE DONE OR STILL DO - MORE THAN ANYTHING I SUPPOSE - I'VE SPENT A LIFE OPPOSING DEFINITION & ENCLOSURE - I AM AWARE THAT WE ARE NOTHING MORE THAN ATTITUDE - JUST AN IDEA - IT SORT OF BROADLY MEANS THAT I'M INTERESTED IN THE WHO THAT WE ARE & NOT THE WHAT THAT WE IMAGINE OURSELVES TO BE - I DON'T BELIEVE THAT THE WHO THAT WE ARE HAS ANY RACE, GENDER OR NATIONALITY - IT HAS NO NAME ☆

☆ - THE NAME THAT WE ARE GIVEN IS NOTHING MORE REALLY THAN A DEPOSITRY FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S IDEAS OF WHO IT IS THEY WANT US TO BE - I THINK ITS INTERESTING THAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK THEY KNOW WHO PEOPLE ARE BETTER THAN THEY THEM SELVES DO - I SUPPOSE WE GIVE SUBSTANCE THROUGH IDEAS & WITHOUT OUR GIFT OF SUBSTANCE WHAT THE HELL IS THERE? - I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE HELL ELSE TO PUT HERE - YOU WILL HAVE TO INVENT SOMETHING

FLY. 05/01
2K8
MAY
DAY



PENNY RIMBAUD - 05/01/2K8 - LOWER EAST SIDE NYC

I LISTENED TO CRASS AS A TEENAGER BUT NEVER ACTUALLY MET ANY OF THE MEMBERS UNTIL THIS PAST SPRING OF 2K8 WHEN MY BAND ZERO CONTENT GOT TO OPEN FOR PENNY RIMBAUD AT THE 123 CENTER IN BED-STUY - IT WAS AN AMAZING NIGHT & I CONVINCED PENNY TO COME TO MY SQUAT & GET PEOPS'D - I SHOWED HIM SOME OF THE DOCUMENTATION OF HOW WE REBUILT A 6 STORY FIRE-GUTTED TENEMENT & MENTIONED HOW CRASS WAS AN EARLY INFLUENCE FOR MY EVENTUALLY EXTREME DIY LIFESTYLE - PENNY IS CURRENTLY REMASTERING THE ENTIRE CRASS CATALOGUE & ALSO MASTERING WORK FOR THE REVITALIZED EXITSTENCIL LABEL INCLUDING THAT OF HIS AVANT-GARDE OUTFIT OF THE EARLY SEVENTIES, EXIT, AND A RECENT RECORDING OF HIS EPIC POEM 'IN THE BEGINNING' WHICH HE PERFORMS ALONGSIDE EX-CRASS SONGSTRESS EVE LIBERTINE - THE ALBUM THAT EARLIER THIS YEAR HE RECORDED IN NYC ALONGSIDE THE BROOKLYN DUO JAPANTHER HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED IN THE US - HE HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED A SECOND VOLUME OF POETRY, 'THE UNIVERSAL OTHER' & IS WORKING ON A SERIES OF ESSAYS OF PHILOSOPHICAL MUSINGS & SPENDING WHATEVER TIME HE CAN FIND TO WANDER ABOUT IN THE MOUNTAINS OF WALES LOOKING FOR 'LOST SPIRITS'.

- TO CONTACT PENNY (I WILL FORWARD ANY MESSES) OR FLY EMAIL FLY@BWAY.NET - PUT MRR IN THE SUBJECT SO I KNOW ITS NOT SPAM!

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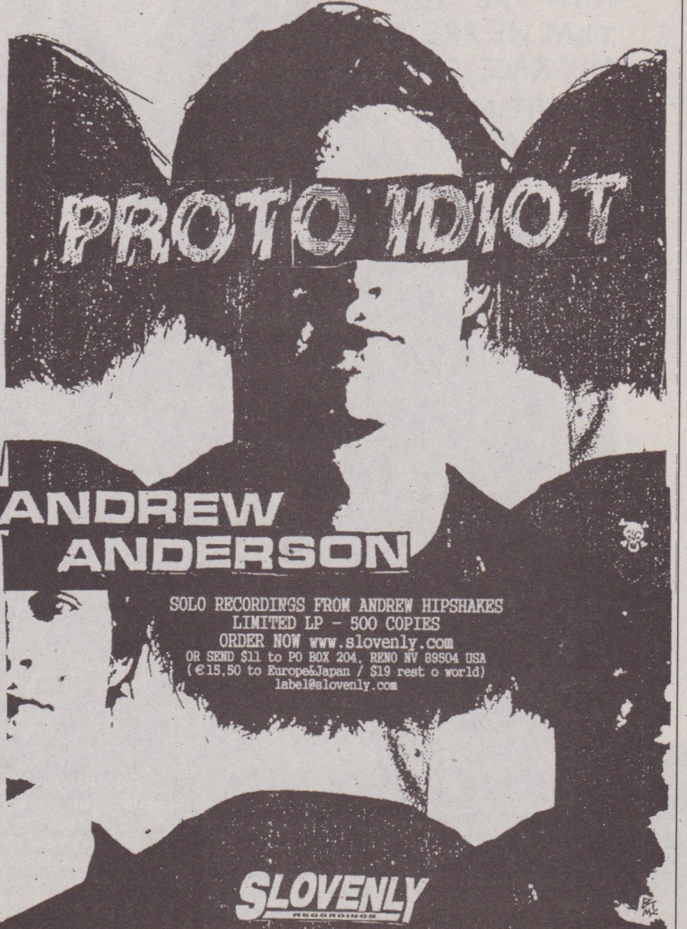
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NEWS

MRR NEWS COMPILED BY THE MAGICAL NEWS ELF

GREEK PROTESTORS SEIZE TV STUDIO

From an article in the BBC news

GREECE — Protesters in Greece have interrupted a TV news bulletin to call for the continuation of mass protests over the recent killing of a teenager by police. Ten youths briefly seized a state NET TV studio, holding banners saying "Stop watching, get out onto the streets".

Separately, youths attacked the riot police headquarters in the capital, Athens, damaging several vehicles. Violence continued for a fourth day in Athens, as a funeral was held for a teenager whose death has sparked rioting across Greece. Clashes erupted near the cemetery where fifteen year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos, shot by police on Saturday, was buried. Youths also fought police outside parliament, in a repeat of the violence that has seen hundreds of buildings torched and dozens injured. The opposition said the government had lost public support and should resign.

On Wednesday union leaders plan to hold a 24-hour general strike over welfare reforms. Police fear the stoppage, which is expected to bring the country to a standstill, could fuel further violence. Fresh protests began in central Athens early on Tuesday. Schools were shut as thousands of teachers, schoolchildren and parents marched on parliament to protest against the killing. The situation escalated as hundreds of young people joined the protest, throwing stones and bottles at lines of riot police, who responded with tear gas.

In the afternoon thousands of mourners gathered for the teenagerSs funeral in a coastal suburb further south. The ceremony was calm, but violence then erupted outside the cemetery. Police used tear gas against groups of youths who threw stones and set rubbish bins ablaze. By late evening, 15,000 police were deployed in the capital to maintain control, Reuters news agency said. There was more fighting elsewhere in the country too. In Thessaloniki, police clashed with groups of young people following a protest march earlier in the day. In Patras, a western port, rioters armed with petrol bombs and stones attacked the main police station.

Two police officers have been charged in connection with Alexandros Grigoropoulos's death, but results of a post-mortem to determine the trajectory of the bullet that killed him are not yet known. The officer who fired says it was a ricochet from a warning shot but witnesses told Greek TV he fired directly at the teenager.

In Athens, Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis held talks with President Karolos Papoulias and opposition leaders to discuss what action to take. Mr. Karamanlis, whose conservative party has a parliamentary majority of just one seat, called for unity and said rioters would not be shown any leniency. "No one has the right to use this tragic incident as an excuse for acts of violence," he said. But socialist leader George Papandreou said Greeks had lost confidence in the government. "The only thing this government can offer is to resign and turn to the people for its verdict," he said.

Scores of arrests have been made since Saturday. Protesters wielding petrol bombs have set fire to banks, shops, hotels, vehicles and even the giant Christmas tree in Athens' central Syntagma Square. Appeals for calm have so far been largely ignored. Police appear to be powerless to prevent rioters from attacking symbols of wealth and prestige in Athens, the BBC's Malcolm Brabant reports.

"Rage is what I feel for what has happened, rage," said one protesting student. "This cop who did it must see what it is to kill a kid and to destroy a life." Mr. Karamanlis has blamed "extreme elements" for taking advantage of the situation to engage in vandalism and pledged to compensate damaged businesses. Observers say a state of emergency may be imposed, giving the authorities special powers to clear the streets. But there is no question of calling in troops, our correspondent says: Greece has bitter memories of military rule so seeing troops on streets would be beyond the pale.

JAMS FOR LADIES ONLY

From the New York Times.

JIDDA, Saudi Arabia — They cannot perform in public. They cannot pose for album cover photographs. Even their jam sessions are secret, for fear of offending the religious authorities in this ultraconservative kingdom. But the members of Saudi Arabia's first all-girl rock band, the Accolade, are clearly not afraid of taboos. The band's first single, "Pinocchio," has become an underground hit here, with hundreds of young Saudis downloading the song from the group's MySpace page. Now, the pioneering foursome—all of them college students, want to start playing regular gigs—inside private compounds, of course — and recording an album. "In Saudi, yes, it's a challenge," said the group's lead singer, Lamia, who has piercings on her left eyebrow and beneath her bottom lip. (Like other band members, she gave only her first name.) "Maybe we're crazy. But we wanted to do something different."

In a country where women are not allowed to drive and rarely appear in public without their faces covered, the band is very different. The prospect of female rockers clutching guitars and belting out angry lyrics about a failed relationship—the theme of "Pinocchio" — would once have been unimaginable here. But this country's harsh code of public morals has slowly thawed, especially in Jidda, by far the kingdom's most cosmopolitan city. A decade ago the cane-wielding religious police terrorized women who were not dressed according to their standards. Young men with long hair were sometimes bundled off to police stations to have their heads shaved, or worse.

Today, there is a growing rock scene with dozens of bands, some of them even selling tickets to their performances. Hip-hop is also popular. The religious police — strictly speaking, the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice — have largely retreated from the streets of Jidda and are somewhat less aggressive even in the kingdom's desert heartland. The change has been especially noticeable since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, when the Saudis confronted the effects of extremism both outside and inside the kingdom. More than 60 percent of Saudi Arabia's population is under 25, and many of the young are pressing for greater freedoms.

"The upcoming generation is different from the one before," said Dina, the Accolade's 21-year-old guitarist and founder. "Everything is changing. Maybe in 10 years it's going to be O.K. to have a band with live performances." Dina said she first dreamed of starting a band three years ago. In September, she and her sister Dareen, 19, who plays bass, teamed up with Lamia and Amjad, the keyboardist. They were already iconoclasts: Dina and Dareen wear their hair teased into thick manes and have pierced eyebrows. During an interview at a Starbucks here, they wore black abayas—he flowing gown that is standard attire for women — but the gowns were open, showing their jeans and T-shirts, and their hair and faces were uncovered. Women are more apt to go uncovered in Jidda than in most other parts of the country, though it is still uncommon. "People always stare at us," Dareen said, giggling. She and her sister are also avid ice skaters, another unusual habit in Saudi Arabia's desert.

The band gets together to practice every weekend at the sisters' house, where their younger brother sometimes fills in on drums. In early November, Dina, who studies art at King Abdulaziz University, began writing a song based on one of her favorite paintings, "The Accolade," by the English pre-Raphaelite painter Edmund Blair Leighton. The painting depicts a long-haired noblewoman knighting a young warrior with a sword. "I liked the painting because it shows a woman who is satisfied with a man," Dina said. She had thought of writing a song based on "Last Supper" by Leonardo da Vinci but decided that doing so would be taking controversy too far. In Saudi Arabia, churches are not allowed, and Muslims who convert to Christianity can be executed.

Dina held out her cellphone to show a video of the band practicing at home. It looked like a garage-band jam session anywhere in the world, with the sisters hunching over their instruments, their brother blasting away at the drums and Lamia clutching a microphone. "We're looking for a drummer," Lamia said. "Five guys have offered, but we really want the band to be all female." Although they know they are doing something unusual, in person the band members seem more playful than provocative. Unlike some of the wealthier Saudi youth who have lived abroad and tasted Western life, they are middle class and have never left their country. "What we're doing — it's not something wrong, it's art, and we're doing it in a good way," Dina said. "We respect our traditions." All the members are quick to add that they disapprove of smoking, drinking and drugs. "You destroy yourself with that," Lamia said.

Yet rock and roll itself is suspect in Saudi Arabia in part because of its association with decadent lifestyles. Most of the bands here play heavy metal, which has only added to the stigma because of the way some Western heavy metal bands use images linked to satanism or witchcraft. In Saudi Arabia, people are sometimes imprisoned and even executed on charges of practicing witchcraft. The first rock bands appeared here about 20 years ago, according to Hassan Hatrash, 34, a journalist and bass player who was one of the pioneers, and their numbers gradually grew. Then in 1995, the police raided a performance in the basement of a restaurant in Jidda, hauling about 300 young men off to jail, including Mr. Hatrash. They were released a few days later without being charged. There is no actual law against playing rock music or performing publicly. "After that, the scene kind of died," he said.

Mr. Hatrash, who has graying shoulder-length hair, recalled how the religious police used to harass young men who advertised their interest in rock and roll. He once had his head was shaved by the police. In recent years, with the religious police on the defensive, bands have begun to play concerts, and a few have recorded albums. Occasionally young men bring their guitars and play outside the cafes on Tahlia Street in Jidda, where young people tend to congregate in the evenings. Although the music is mostly familiar to heavy metal fans anywhere — thrashing guitars and howling vocals — some of the lyrics reflect the special challenges of life and love in this puritanical country. "And I Don't Know Why," a song by Mr. Hatrash's band, Most of Us, has these lyrics: "Why is it always so hard to get to you / When it's something we both want to do / Every time we have to create an alibi / So that we can meet and love or at least try...

As the Saudi rock scene grew, Dina gathered the courage to start her own band. It plans to move slowly, she said, with "jams for ladies only" at first. The band members' parents support them, though they have asked them to keep things low-key. Eventually, Dina said, they hope to play real concerts, perhaps in Dubai. "It's important for them to see what we're capable of," she said.

SIT IN AT REPUBLIC WINDOWS AND DOORS IN CHICAGO

Beth Rooney for The New York Times

CHICAGO — The word came just after lunch on Dec. 2 in the cafeteria of Republic Windows and Doors. A company official told assembled workers that their plant on this city's North Side, which had operated for more than four decades, would be closed in just three days. Civil rights activists praised the sit-in, but the 240 workers insisted that they just wanted what they were entitled to by law: 60 days' severance and earned vacation. There was a murmur of shock, then anger, in the drab room lined with snack machines. Some women cried. But a few of the factory's union leaders had been anticipating this moment. Several weeks before, they had noticed that equipment had disappeared from the plant, and they began tracing it to a nearby rail yard. And so, in secret, they had been discussing a bold but potentially dangerous plan: occupying the factory if it closed.

By the time their six-day sit-in ended on Wednesday night, the 240 laid-off workers at this previously anonymous 125,000-square-foot plant had become national symbols of worker discontent amid the layoffs sweeping the country. Civil rights workers compared them to Rosa Parks. But all the workers wanted was what they deserved under the law: 60 days of severance pay and earned vacation time.

And to their surprise, their drastic action worked. Late Wednesday, two major banks agreed to lend the company enough money to give the workers what they asked for. "In the environment of this economic crisis, we felt we were obligated to fight for our money," Armando Robles, a maintenance worker and president of Local 1110 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, which represented the workers, said in Spanish.

The reverberations of the workers' victory are likely to be felt for months as plants continue to close. Bob Bruno, director of the labor studies program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, predicted organized labor would be emboldened by the workers' success. "If you combine some palpable street anger with organizational resources in a changing political mood," he said, "you can begin to see more of these sort of riskier, militant adventures, and they're more likely to succeed."

The tale of how this small band of workers came to embody the welter of emotions in the country's economic downturn is flecked with plot turns from the deepening recession, growing anger over the Wall Street bailout and difficult business calculations. The workers were not aware, for example, that Republic's owners had quietly set up a new company, Echo Windows LLC, incorporated on Nov. 18, according to records with the Illinois secretary of state's office. And Echo had bought a window and door manufacturing plant in Red Oak, Iowa. Company officials in Iowa declined to comment, but Mary Lou Friedman, the human resources manager at Echo, said in a telephone interview that the factory had 102 employees, all non-union.

And at the last minute of negotiations, according to Representative Luis V. Gutierrez, Democrat of Illinois, who helped moderate talks to resolve the standoff, and union officials, Republic's chief executive, Richard Gillman, demanded that any new bank loan to help the employees also cover the lease of several of his cars — a 2007 BMW 350xi and a 2002 Mercedes S500 are among those registered to company addresses — as well as eight weeks of his salary, at $225,000 a year. The demand held up the settlement, which was reached only after Mr. Gillman agreed to back down. (Mr. Gillman said Friday that he had sought the money to offset a large bonus in 2007 that he had chosen not to accept.)

In many ways, however, Republic was an unlikely setting for a worker uprising. Many workers interviewed, including some who had been at the plant for more than three decades, said they considered it a decent place to work. It was a mostly Hispanic work force, with some blacks. Some earned over $40,000 a year, including overtime, pulling them into the middle class and enabling them to set up 401(k) retirement accounts and buy modest homes.

But after Mr. Gillman took over as owner in 2006, there were several rounds of layoffs, and the number of employees fell to about 240, from more than 500. The company had been affected by the declining housing market, and Mr. Gillman said it had also been affected by Chicago's higher production costs. He said he had hoped to salvage the business by buying another manufacturer in Ohio, but was turned down by Bank of America. "This has been the worst week of my life," he said. "I know many of those workers at Republic personally, and I put 34 years of my life into that business, and all my money, too. No stone was left unturned in our effort to save Republic." By mid-October, the company had exhausted its $5 million line of credit with Bank of America, and the bank was refusing to lend the company any more money. "We declined to provide an additional loan because of the company's dire financial conditions," said Julie Westermann, a bank spokeswoman. Bank officials said Republic filed for bankruptcy on Friday.

In mid-November, during a late-night vigil to see where the missing equipment was going, Mark Meinster, 35, one of the factory's union organizers, broached the possibility of a sit-in with Mr. Robles, the president of the local, if the plant should be closed. Mr. Robles, 38, who had worked at the factory for eight years, said he was excited by the idea but also mulled the potential repercussions. "We'd basically be trespassing on private property," he said. "We might get arrested." Nevertheless, Mr. Robles told Mr. Meinster that he believed most workers would participate. In the coming days, the idea would take root among other union leaders. On Tuesday, Dec. 2, Barry Dubin, the company's chief operating officer, delivered the final verdict to workers, telling them they would probably not be getting severance pay or be paid for accrued vacation days. Union leaders quickly moved to hash out details of an occupation. "We knew keeping the windows in the warehouse was a bargaining chip," said Melvin Maclin, a groove cutter and vice president of the local. While some workers picketed Bank of America, others began attending to their own financial worries, with many liquidating their 401(k)'s. Others cast worried eyes on their meager savings accounts.

On Friday, union officials met with company officers and learned the workers' health insurance was being cut off. Later, with employees gathered in the cafeteria, Mr. Robles asked for a show of hands of how many would be willing to stay at the factory. All hands went up, with shouts of, "Sí, se puede!" — or "Yes, we can!"

"I ain't got no other choice," Alexis McCoy, 32, a driver's assistant, said later. "I have a newborn. I have to take care of my family." Local politicians discouraged the police from arresting the workers. Exasperated company officials decided not to press the matter as the news media began arriving in droves. The workers organized themselves into three shifts and set up committees in charge of cleanup, security and safety. A sign was taped to a cafeteria wall banning alcohol, drugs and smoking.

Negotiations involving the company, Bank of America and union officials began late Monday afternoon at the bank's offices downtown.

At the root of much of the discussions was the federal law requiring employees to be given 60 days' notice, or that amount of severance, when plants close. Bank officials said it was not their responsibility as lenders to ensure that the company made these payments. They said later that they had been discussing closing the plant with the company as far back as July, giving it plenty of time to fulfill its obligations to its workers. Nevertheless, union officials argued that Bank of America had received billions of taxpayer dollars in the recent federal bailout, meant to free up credit to companies like Republic. "We never made the argument you have a legal responsibility," said Mr. Gutierrez, who described bank officials as willing to be helpful almost immediately. "We said, 'Will you make a corporate responsibility decision?' "

Bank of America's offer to lend the company roughly $1.35 million came on Tuesday, and additional help came from William M. Daley, the brother of Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago and the Midwest chairman of JPMorgan Chase, which owned 40 percent of the window company and agreed to lend an additional $400,000. Mr. Gillman's demands, however, became a major sticking point. "I'm not going to describe to you the words that were used when those issues were brought up," Mr. Gutierrez said.

Eventually, the parties agreed that the workers would be the only ones to benefit. They would be paid severance and for vacation, and receive two months' health coverage. The company owners also agreed to come up with $114,000 to cover the payroll for their last week of work. When union negotiators returned to the factory on Wednesday evening with the agreement, the workers approved it unanimously. They emerged from the factory chanting, "Yes, we did!"

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R.I.P. JAMIE EWING

By Justin Sullivan

Jamie Ewing passed away at the age of 25 on the morning of November 5th, in his apartment in Brooklyn. He sang and played guitar in a host of bands over the course of the last eleven years, the best known of which was Bent Outta Shape. Bent released two full-length records, the self titled lp and the seminal *Stray Dog Town* as well as splits with Drunken Boat and Snuggle. Recently, he had been playing with the Young Men, who released a 7" on Jamie's Plate of Shrimp label, as well as the Tender Wizards, Radio Faces, Silk Robes, Bossy, and handing out solo four track recordings to friends. He was known around the country by close friends, and remembered by people who only met him once. He is survived by his parents, brother, and sister, and by all of us.

There's an oft-quoted standard of friendship invoking "taking a bullet" for someone. People like to talk tough with this one—"they would take a bullet for me!"—and the idea of loyalty is conferred. But bullets flying are not so common, at least among the people who usually utter this sentiment, and this loyalty test is rarely given. But what about, "he'd always take my calls at three in the morning," or "he'd drive me to Baltimore and back for a court date." A 9 A.M. court date for driving on a suspended license—I couldn't do the drive, obviously, and needed to leave New York at 4 A.M., and then head home directly after. Jaime was the only person I knew who would do it on a moment's notice, and even better, think it would be fun. He was so tired on the drive back, having only slept in the back seat for the hour I was in court. I knew I would always remember it.

He liked to walk around at night. He liked the stoops of Brooklyn, and he liked the "Voice of the People" letters section in the Daily News. He liked *Repo Man*. He'd play you a song, if he had a new one, and he always had a new one. And it was better than anything you'd be doing. He would just sit you down and play it acoustically for you, or play you a four track of the newest batch. Some people would sneer that Bent played too much at the time. Does it feel like too much now? There's a flier that Jaime made that was on a friend's fridge for a while. Under "Bent Outta Shape" the description was "People say we play too much. Fuck you! Eat Shit, or a Bag of Dicks if you prefer." Jimbo was always courteous enough to offer a choice like that. But therein is the righteousness I always wanted to be around. I got chills when I first heard, "you come around here, with your friends and a sneer, and try to tell me that I'm out of line. But if I'm always wrong and you're always right, why can't you even look me in the eye?" This was a call for honesty, and he did it in a way that the rest of us stumble over. We'd rather write long winded, over obvious lyrics about "honesty" or love. His records were a testament to how much he yearned to love and be loved. He made weighty concepts into good lines, clichés into new ideas, empty streets into possibilities. I'll miss that. For those of us who would listen to every half-baked critic, Jamie just kept doing what he knew he needed to. And people loved him, but if they didn't, he understood. ("It's my fault that I'm lonely.") I'll miss that too.

We look to music to find people who will say the things we feel, but can't. I would never say or even write, "I miss the days when you were always drunk," but damn if I didn't know what he meant. Sometimes even he couldn't find the words. Just letting us know that there was a "certain way I feel. But I could never say it to you." And we knew what he meant that time too.

On the worst tour any of us had ever been on, I watched Bent Outta Shape every night. And years later, I was talking about it on another tour. How effortless it seemed for him to get up in front of people, and say something like "what a bullshit crap!," and instantly gain their appreciation and affection. Most bands I see try so hard, with the "thanks" and the explanations, and the trite stories of the drive that day. He was better than that.

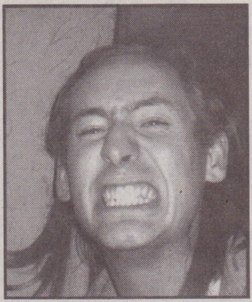
I'll miss his messy desk calendar and to-do lists, and how much he hated talking on the subway. When we did moving jobs together, I'd ask him about his "Friendly Man with Van" days (business cards said "I'll be your beast of burden," and later "No jobs too small, some jobs too big.") He said, by the end, he was "purposely unfriendly." This was, of course, hilarious. The thing is, even when Jamie was trying to be unfriendly, people still loved him. He was infinitely loveable.

Jamie had the essence of the type of politics that we strive to live, with none of the rhetoric. He was loyal and understanding, but confrontational when the situation called for it. He wasn't perfect, but he was honest in his failings, and that is more than I could say for a lot of the people I know. I had known him for ten years and I never wanted to be around him more than over the past summer. We would meet up on a corner, or in the park in the middle of the night. We'd make up fake Jonathan Richman songs ("Oh the park is a wonderful place to be, after dark...") and talk about our lives. The good talk—the complaining talk with a friend, whose very presence makes the complaints seem trivial. Plans for the future. And that's what I think about now. For, hearty exhortations of "remembering him" aside, the weight of this is there are no more plans for the future for him. And our plans for the future can only include the idea of him. Like this one: Play as much as you want, and love honestly. It's a good idea, but I'm sure he could have made it sound better.

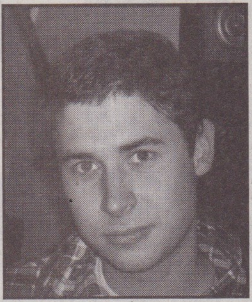
MRR asks YOU:

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?

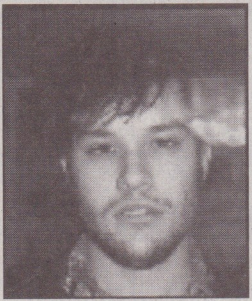
This month's question: Does the future belong to us?
(asked at a show at the "Chinatown dungeon")



Alex, 24, San Francisco/Athens GA
The future belongs to us, and your mom, and everyone else we love at the Thanksgiving dinner turkey table.



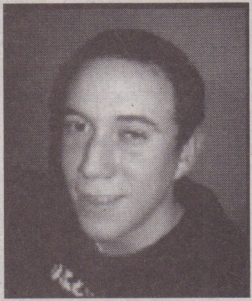
Kyle, 23, San Francisco
I would say yes. I'm an optimist.



Brian, 22, San Francisco
Just as long as we don't leave the house and fuck with anybody else.

Kaitlyn, 23, San Francisco
Sure.

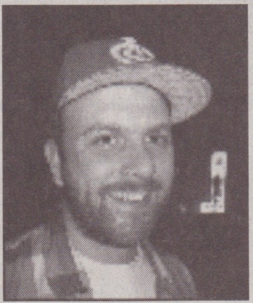
Krista, 23, San Francisco
Things are going bad right now and it's because of us, so it belongs to us. We're gonna die if we don't make the future ours.



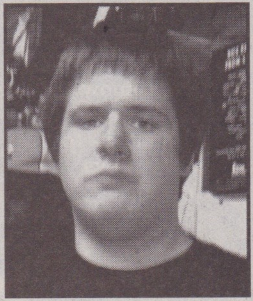
Richard, 21, San Francisco
Yes. The oldies are dying off.

Electra, 21, San Francisco
It belongs to yourself.

Danielle, 27, San Francisco
I don't know who the fuck the future belongs to. I mean, it kinda seems like maybe it's ours.



Eric, 28, San Francisco
The future ALWAYS belongs to us.



Sean, 20, San Francisco
It belongs to the capitalists.

THE OOGA BOOGAS

It would be too easy to compare the simple yet melodic rock of the Ooga Boogas to that of a blunt blow of a Caveman's club —or its modern day equivalent — a meth-head's steering wheel lock, but the truth is their steady drum snare and guitar does eek out a loose primal feel. With a rich pedigree in the Melbourne garage rock scene — The Sailors, The Onyas, and current knockouts, Eddy Current Suppression Ring — The Oogas aren't here to win you over with new sounds. They describe their debut album Romance and Adventure, *released on their own Aarght! label, as a "rollicking concept album filled to the brim with tales of gash and hijinks."*

It's true. The album is good, especially accompanied by a few Aldi beers, but like watching Farm Aid *on DVD you miss out on the realness of the heartland and what the Ooga Boogas are all about unless you are front and center at one of their live shows singing along to, "I'm an Ooga Booga and my cocks made of wood and though it drags on the ground it still tastes good." Old school Mellen-camp type stuff. Having just taken the heartland back to its heart—the USA—on a tour that included their return to Memphis' Gonerfest, a four-day rock brouhaha now into its fifth year.*

This interview was conducted in two parts. The first over pizza in the Tote band room, the second next to a cigarette machine in the pool-room of what was once Melbourne's notorious Nazi punk haunt, the Birmingham Hotel.

Interview by Tim Scott

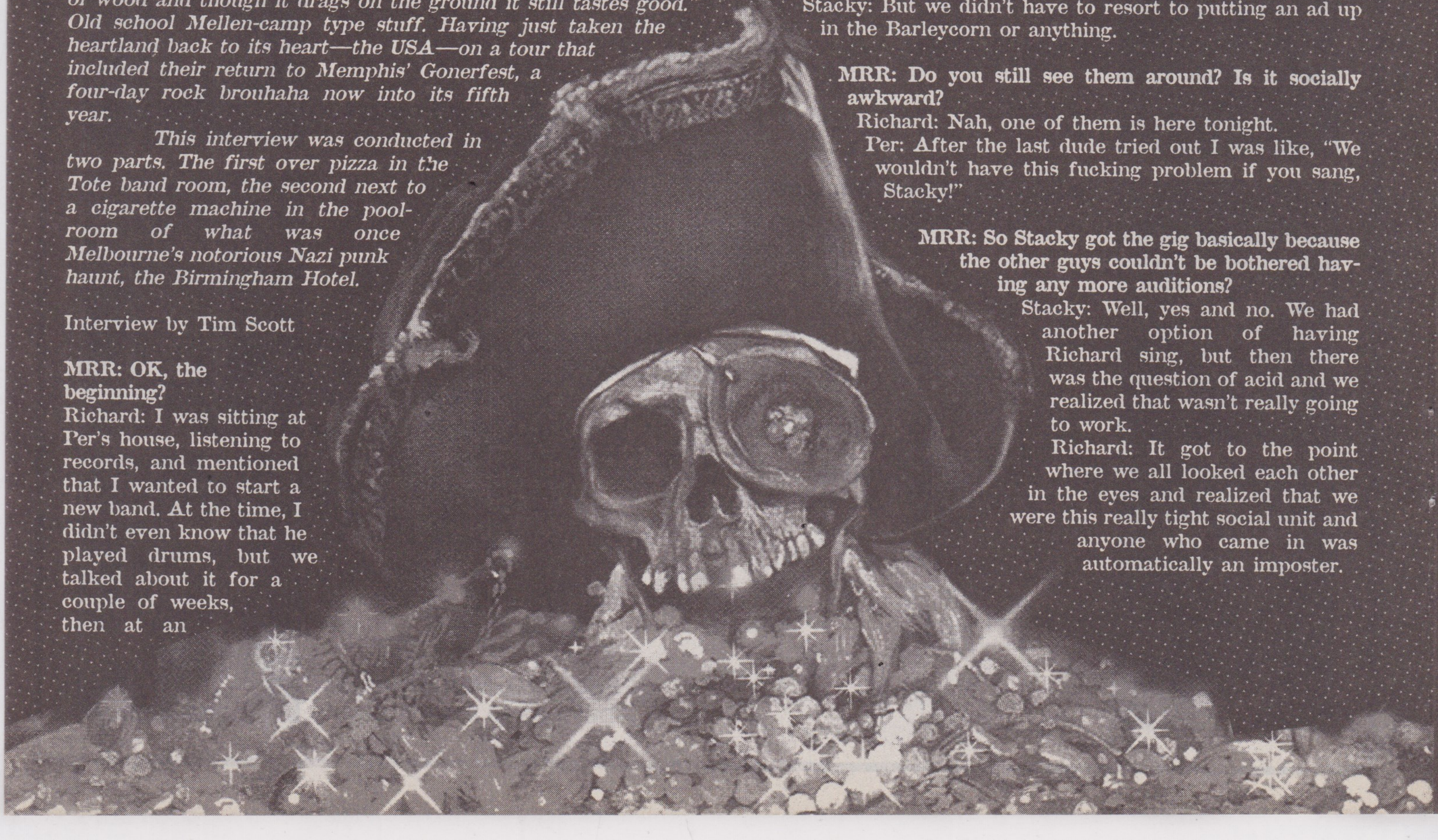
MRR: OK, the beginning?
Richard: I was sitting at Per's house, listening to records, and mentioned that I wanted to start a new band. At the time, I didn't even know that he played drums, but we talked about it for a couple of weeks, then at an Eddy Current Suppression gig, he suggested that we ask Mikey to play. I thought it would sound too much like Eddy Current, but we ended up asking him anyway, and he said he wanted to be in the band if it *didn't* sound like Eddy Current.

MRR: So, Mikey is like your…
Richard: If Mikey wasn't in the band you wouldn't even be here.

MRR: Mikey is your connection to what a super group could be.
Stacky: Yes, if when you say "super group" you mean Audioslave, Temple of the Dog, and if you want to make an Australian comparison, Tex, Don, and Charlie.
Mikey: We started jamming, but were looking for a singer for ages. And Stacky was keen to join, but he didn't want to sing.
Per: I remember one of my friends coming down, but he didn't make it. Actually three singers didn't make the cut.
Stacky: But we didn't have to resort to putting an ad up in the Barleycorn or anything.

MRR: Do you still see them around? Is it socially awkward?
Richard: Nah, one of them is here tonight.
Per: After the last dude tried out I was like, "We wouldn't have this fucking problem if you sang, Stacky!"

MRR: So Stacky got the gig basically because the other guys couldn't be bothered having any more auditions?
Stacky: Well, yes and no. We had another option of having Richard sing, but then there was the question of acid and we realized that wasn't really going to work.
Richard: It got to the point where we all looked each other in the eyes and realized that we were this really tight social unit and anyone who came in was automatically an imposter.



MRR: What about musically? Besides *not* sounding like Eddy Current, did you have an idea as to how you wanted to sound?
Richard: It was to start a band that didn't sound like anything else—not to not sound like anything else was how we wanted to sound.
Mikey: I do see a pattern forming for say when I write a song, it's a loose pattern, but we seem to work on it in the same way.
Richard: But it's like there is this big cauldron. A big musical cauldron and we just pick up the ladle and take a sip.

MRR: Do you consider yourselves a fully-fledged band as supposed to say, a side project, or something of that sort?
Richard: Yeah, we are a band. I mean we play in other bands, but the other bands are in no way as important as this band. [*laughter*]

MRR: As guys who have been playing as long as you have in various bands, do you feel a sense of responsibility being part of the old guard?
Stacky: Good question for Per.
Per: I'm not in the old guard, am I?
Mikey: What does the old guard actually guard?
Richard: And what do you expect from people who have been playing in bands exactly? Oh, I don't know advice? Invite's to play gigs with you?
Richard: No I don't feel any responsibility.

MRR: Why the decision to record the album up in Mansfield?
Mikey: To get away. Have no hassles. No phone calls. Just hang out in the bush. Just to do it ourselves.
Richard. We thought that rather than hire time in a studio, why not go on a holiday for the weekend?

MRR: So there was no drama with the recording?
Mikey: It was the best recording experience ever, I reckon.
Per: It was definitely one of the best band get-togethers.
Mikey: Yeah, it was a total bro-down, you know, we could cook and do the dishes. Studios aren't very conducive for activity or a good band experience. We have our own gear—we don't need a lot we just needed to set up in some country shack and cut loose.
Per: It was like a communal man date.
Richard: There were bulls.
Stacky: There were some tits too.

MRR: Tits on bulls?
Stacky: No birds. Blue tits. There were tits flying around everywhere.

MRR: What were the locals like?
Mikey: Well, there were no actual locals until you got into Mansfield.
Per: We looked like a really kind of weird gang because we had all made a pact not to shave during recording.
Stacky: It was interesting to see what it's like to live and work on a farm. Richard and Mikey got chased across a field by a bull. We wore RM Williams.
Richard: I got my chambray shirt a bit sweaty that weekend.
Stacky: It was also where we got our new direction, our new look. We now shop exclusively at Colorado and Rivers for our outfits, Moleskins and chambrays.

MRR: Boat shoes?
Stacky: Personally, I like to wear RMs a good pair of RM Williams boots. We visited Lake Eildon too, which was nice. We got to see some of the reservoir and the water level affected by the drought. That was interesting wasn't it?

MRR: Will water level graphs figure in the album liner notes?
-Stacky: We are going to dedicate it to the people and the water levels of that area, yes.
Richard: There is a pictorial documentation of the whole weekend. There are no actual liner notes it's just photos and images.
Stacky: Mansfield is a complex part of the world. It's like a termite mound, and we approached it the same way scientists might a termite mound.
Per: One thing about Mansfield is that it's got a great music shop. Like if you need a guitar string or something, they bend over backwards to help you.

MRR: Is Mansfield considered "high country"?
Stacky: Yes, Mt. Buller is not far from there.
Per: How do you even determine what is high country and what is not?
Stacky: The way they determine high country is that they take a mountain man up into the mountains and if he cares for the land, it is considered high country.

MRR: We're you surprised with the recording when you got it back?
Mikey: No, other people were more surprised. Which in a little way is kind of insulting when they are kind of saying, "Jeez, I didn't realize you sound this good"!

MRR: Do you think that may come from the way you work together and your sense of humour? That some people may not take you as seriously as they should?
Richard: I'm sure it comes across as sometimes we are just a bunch of funny buggers, but when you think about the conversations we have while we are writing a song or what to do next, it's all pretty serious.

MRR: You sing songs about squid and octopi.
Mikey: I think the not-too-serious is a correct assessment of the band. I don't think we plan everything so much.
Richard: No, we are not super serious, but we aren't a joke band either.
Per: I remember one of the first conversations you and I had about the band when you came up to me that night and said you wanted to start a band. When you first came to me and said I was OK, what is important? And you said, "no ambition" and I thought, "OK, I'm in."

MRR: But certainly you must have some ambition to record a record and tour to the States?
Mikey: But they are only personal ambitions, they are nothing to do with success or anything.
Richard: When you have bands with ambition, there is some objective beyond the overseas tour—always something else that they have to get next. Going away

with your mates for a weekend should be the reason why the band is there for in the first place, and then going on tour is the end result.
Mikey: We don't have to get signed, because we have started our own label. We don't have to get our manager, because we book our own gigs.
Per: Yeah, we can do all of it on our own from the artwork to the recording to the booking. It's a good feeling—some would think maybe self-indulgent, but we don't need anything or anybody.
Stacky: In regards to squids and octopus, there's actually a family tree kind of thing going on in the evolution of the Ooga Boogas. Before us there was a band called the Calamaris, which was about New Zealand squid and I guess through that band we came up with some of these lyrical ideas. There was also a band I had with Dempster (from the Sailors) called the Octopus Brothers. And again we sang songs about the plight of these particular animals.

MRR: But I don't think these are particularly threatened or endangered animals.
Stacky: No, I don't think so, but we are just interested in the lives of these creatures.

MRR: On the other hand, the start to your song "Ooga Boogas II" sounds like L7.
Mikey: Really? What the guitar the sound?

MRR: Yeah just at very start.
Per: Haha. I guess we've now heard all of it—Roy Orbsion, the B52's and now L7.

MRR: Are there any songs that you like on the new record individually?
Richard: I like "Rich and Me".
Mikey: The people seem to like "Neon Sunset" on the record. My girlfriend's favorite song is "Fanny Mae."

MRR: Who is Fanny Mae? Is the song based on a real character?
Mikey: Better ask Stacky.
Stacky: It's about growing more mature.
Per: Someone said it was like Skyhooks... [*laughter*] and I couldn't argue with them.

MRR: Do you read your own press? I've read some reviews, one in particular that wasn't so kind about your live show.
Richard: You can laugh it off in public and that, but it really hurts. [*laughter*]

MRR: The reviewer seemed to have good reasons though.
Mikey: I think it came down to the fact that we weren't as hot as the guys in the Vasco Era.

MRR: I did some research, and back in the '50s the word Ooga Booga was considered quite a racist word.
Per: It still is.

MRR: What is the reaction when you take the stage in a place like Mobile, Alabama and say, "Hi we're the Ooga Booga's."
Mikey: My girlfriend was wearing one of our t-shirts in Austin last year and some dude pulled her up and said, "You don't want to be wearing that t-shirt around here."
MRR: You should tread with caution south of the Mason Dixon line then.
Richard: That's why today none of our merchandise actually say the name on it. There's no name just the image. The brand.
Stacky: We are actually very similar to Prince in that department.
Mikey: I didn't realize that it had a racist connotation to it.
Richard: We just thought it was cavemany.
Stacky: I actually did some research on the word and the origins of the word is from the British colonialists when they were in Africa and they would use it for like a term for news or whatever, like, "Have you heard any *ooga booga*"?

MRR: The new album is titled *Romance and Adventure*. It sounds part Lonely Plant Guide to Cambodia, part Falls Creek chalet website. What is more important to you? "Romance" or "Adventure"?
Richard: I'm not sure we could answer that collectively. Mikey would say romance.
Per: I'm not very romantic or adventurous.
Mikey: How about we vote. Who says romance? [*he performs a hand count*] One, two, three.
Richard: I'm the only one without a girlfriend.

MRR: So you are up for the adventure of finding a girlfriend?
Per: I think adventure is more like walking the streets of Port Moresby as a male hooker at two-AM.

MRR: What is Gonerfest like? An international garage rock trade show?
Richard: It's like if you had 20 bands at the Tote over a weekend

MRR: Is it all the same garagey stuff?
Richard: You get your garage band, but you also get your fucked up weird stuff

MRR: How did you get along last year?
Richard: Oh, there were a few people there at two o'clock in the afternoon when we played. We were first on Saturday. No, but there were some people there to see us.

MRR: What's the best thing about Memphis?
Mikey: Food, nice people, cheap housing, but it's got the worst crime rate in America.

MRR: But for a tourist, isn't that like a badge of honor to say you visited the city with the highest crime rate?
Mikey: It's kind of cool. We were walking down the street and some cop pulled up on the curb and said, "What the hell are you doing here"?

MRR: What was your answer?
Mikey: We're walking home. [*laughter*] That's how we answer every cop.

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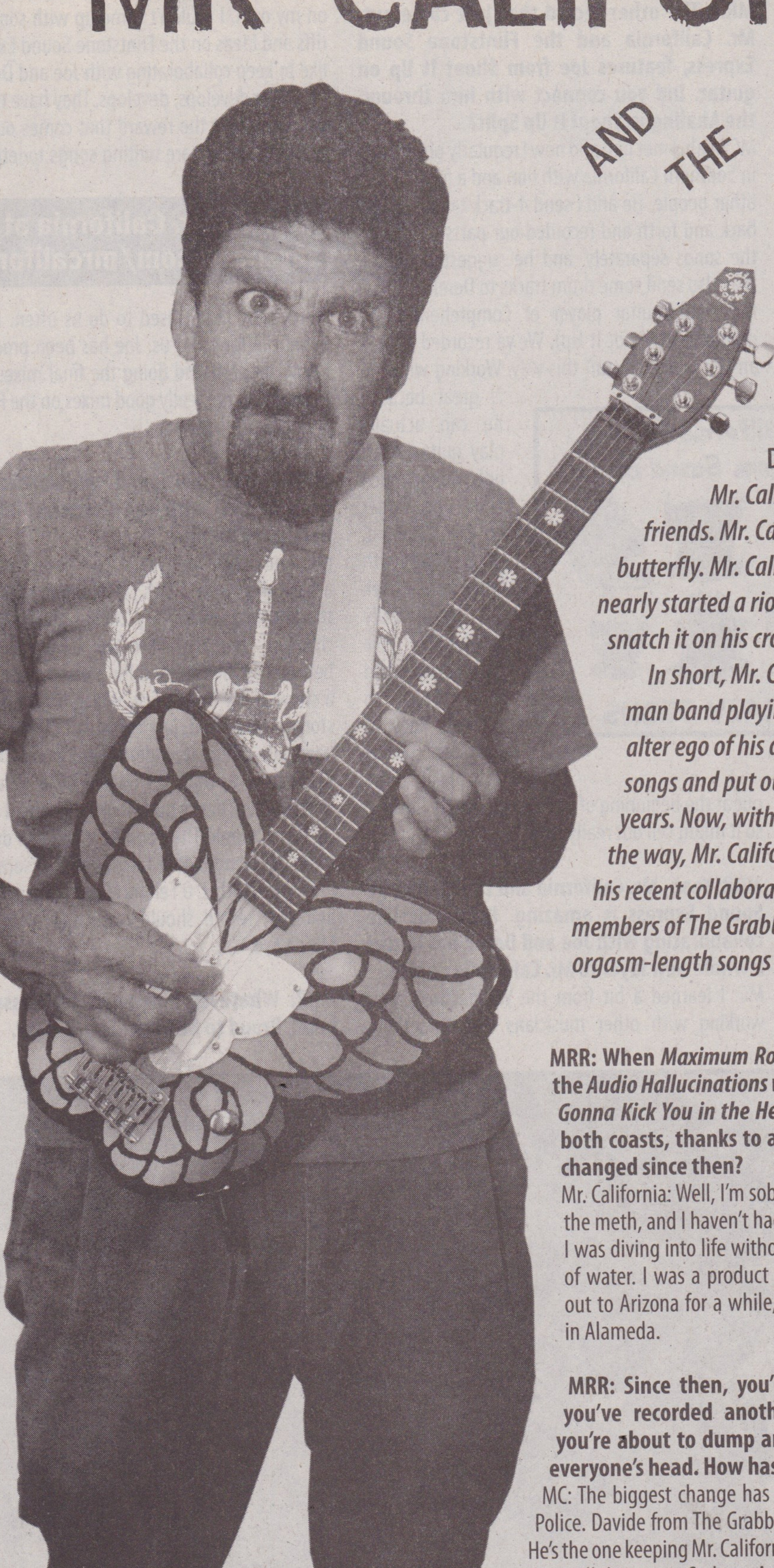
MR CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE



Mr. California has recorded more songs than all the bands in the original* The Decline of Western Civilization *combined. Mr. California has more than 37,000 MySpace friends. Mr. California plays a guitar shaped like a butterfly. Mr. California once wore a fake rubber vagina that nearly started a riot at a show when an angry lesbian tried to snatch it on his crotch.

In short, Mr. California is quite possibly the greatest one-man band playing today. Along with the State Police—the alter ego of his drum machine—he has recorded nearly 500 songs and put out about a dozen records in the past nine years. Now, with four records just released and four more on the way, Mr. California, aka Terry Ryan, agreed to talk about his recent collaborations with members of Shoot It Up, former members of The Grabbies, and doing what he does best—playing orgasm-length songs that will kick you in the head.

Interview and photos by Shotgun Jeb

MRR: When *Maximum Rocknroll* last interviewed you in January 2003, the *Audio Hallucinations* record was coming out on Load Records and *I'm Gonna Kick You in the Head* was cracking skulls through CD players on both coasts, thanks to a tour you just had just wrapped up. What has changed since then?

Mr. California: Well, I'm sober now for one thing. I'm off the psych meds and off the meth, and I haven't had a drink in a while. At the time of the last interview, I was diving into life without taking a step back and seeing if the pool was full of water. I was a product of America—I was America all medded up. I went out to Arizona for a while, but then came back to San Francisco, and now I'm in Alameda.

MRR: Since then, you've had a handful of seven-inches come out, you've recorded another LP that's looking for a distributor, and you're about to dump another bomb of seven-inches and split CDs on everyone's head. How has your music progressed?

MC: The biggest change has been working with other people, not just the State Police. Davide from The Grabbies is the reason I'm doing anything at all right now. He's the one keeping Mr. California out in the world. He and Roy, my old tour manager, drove all the way to Sedona, Arizona, to rescue me and bring me back to Frisco.

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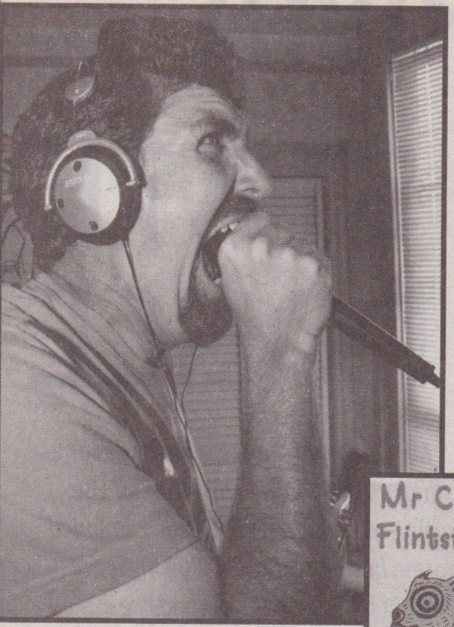
MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE

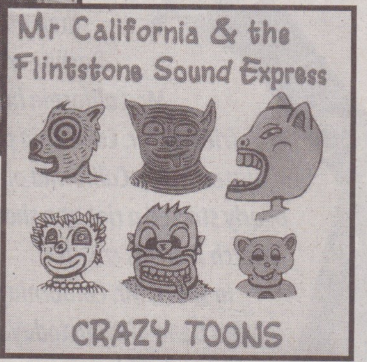


MRR: And you and Davide were in the Vagina Boys, right?
MC: Yeah, Davide put a band together with one of his school mates, they had a vocalist audition but that singer decided it wasn't for him, so I gave it a shot. The next thing I know, I'd been playing with the Vagina Boys for a year and a half. We have one seven-inch that came out a little while ago on Kenrock Records from Sweden. We don't play together anymore because all the band members are busy.

MRR: The record that's out is great. I love "I Don't Want To Be Gay For You."
MC: I don't mind doing a Mentors or GG Allin joke, especially in the Bay Area, where everyone is so PC. If you say something like, "Yo, yo, yo, I like big tits," then you offend like three sectors of people. But the Vagina Boys were playing during a screwed-up time in my life. I was working at a strip club, and the fucked-up, sexist, tongue-and-cheek lyrics of the band came out of working 40-plus hours a week and being miserable.

MRR: Davide and you were two out of the three members of Analingus, which just released a split 7" with Shoot It Up.
MC: Yeah, Davide was on guitar, Aesop played drums, and I was on vocals. Those songs were really four Grabbies songs that Alessandro never put vocals on, so when we were hit up by Riff Raff Records, I laid down the vocals and drew the awful cover art.

MRR: The other record that just came out, Mr. California and the Flintstone Sound Express, features Joe from Shoot It Up on guitar. Did you connect with him through the Analingus/Shoot It Up Split?
MC: Yeah, I met him and now I regularly play shows in Southern California with him and a few other people. He and I send 4-track tapes back and forth and recorded our parts of the songs separately, and he suggested that also send some drum tracks to Derek, the singer/guitar player of Comprehend (and drummer of Shoot It Up). We've recorded almost an LP's worth of stuff this way. Working with Joe is great because he can actually play guitar. I can only do so much with one finger on the fretboard, so working with him and Derek has been really helpful. We decided to send some tracks to Kenrock Records, and the seven-inch just came out at the beginning of October. It's pretty limited, so it might sell out really fast.

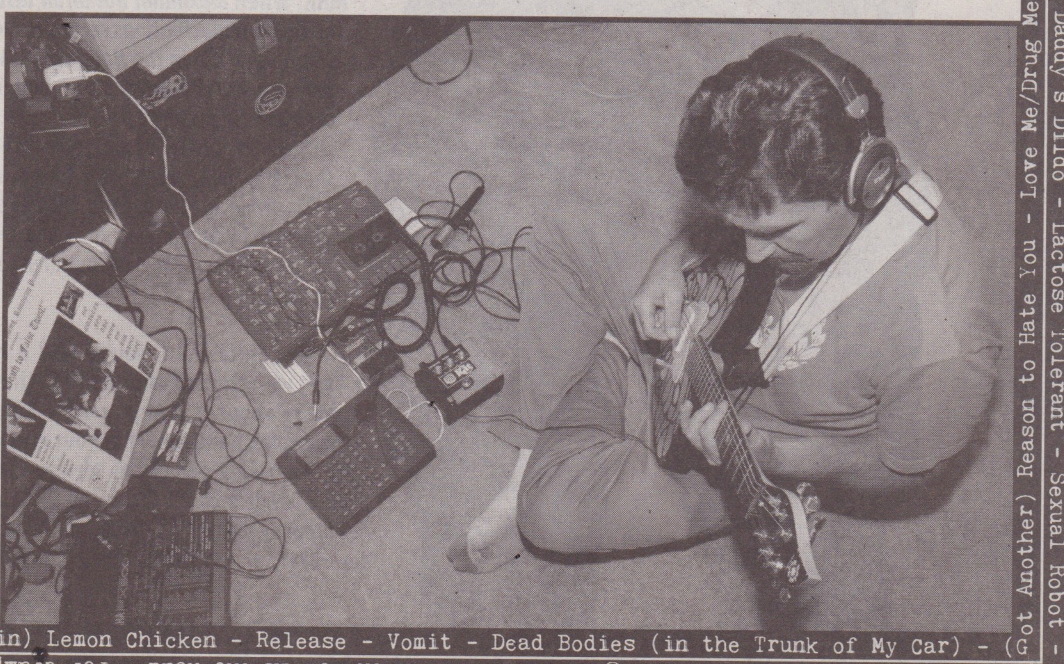

Mr California & the Flintstone Sound Express
CRAZY TOONS

MRR: Yeah, Mr. California and the Flintstone Sound Express is amazing. It sounds like collaborating with Joe and Derek has added a whole new layer to Mr. California's noise.
MC: I learned a bit from the Vagina Boys, that working with other musicians was something that added an extra dimension that I couldn't offer on my own. I couldn't come up with some of the riffs and ideas on the Flintstone Sound Express. I'd like to keep collaborating with Joe and Derek, but whatever develops, develops. They have their own band, too, but the reward that comes out of this is Joe and Derek are writing songs together now, which they didn't used to do as often. It's been beneficial for all of us. Joe has been producing a lot of this stuff and doing the final mixes, so he's to blame all the really good mixes on the Flinstone Sound Express record.

Listen to Mr. California at www.myspace.com/mrcalifornia

MRR: You mentioned Alessandro, who used to sing with The Grabbies. Whatever happened to him?
MC: Anus is all the way in Cleveland, working at a bar called Now That's Class. When I last toured the Midwest in Janurary 2008, I played the a gig there on New Year's Eve and it was so great, I became the house band for a week. I also played a show at My Mind's Eye, which is a great record store in Lakewood, just outside of Cleveland. They have lots of great underground punk rock stuff that's hard to find. It's owned by a rather jolly, uncharacteristically punk rock guy named Charles. He loves Winnie The Pooh as much as I do, if not more. Alessandro gave Charles a CD of some songs I recorded with J. O'Felony (Joe from Shoot It Up), and that record should come out soon on My Mind's Eye.

MRR: Whatever happened to Alessandro's label, Proud to Be Idiot? Some of Mr.



MR. CALIFORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE

California's best stuff came out through PTBI.
MC: Can you believe it? Proud to Be Idiot is going to put out its first release since the first Shoot It Up record in 2005, but the weird thing is, Alessandro's not in charge of this one. Davide is putting out the second Vagina Boys seven-inch, which will be a true single with just two songs. The Vagina Boys recorded a lot of stuff, about enough for four seven-inches.

MRR: With all these records coming out, it sounds like you're back to your DIY roots after doing a stint with a slightly larger label like Load.
MC: There's good things and bad things that come with both DIY and being on a label. I don't have the money to put out the next record, but I'm still working on it, and it's close to being finished. I keep recording stuff, throwing it down on tapes, and sending them to Joe from Shoot It Up. He's been stockpiling them so he can mix them down later. I can just focus on writing more songs if I don't have to worry about mixing them. The positive thing about DIY is that it works for the short songs I write. A lot of indie labels don't mess with seven-inches, but my songs are these short bursts that fit better on seven-inches. I'm not opposed to doing something with another indie label like Load again, and until this point, I didn't have lots of material worthy of another record with wider distribution. It's just that people seem more interested in seven-inches.

MRR: With all these new releases, Mr. California is here to stay, huh?
MC: That's right. Keep your ears open for these records as they come out—or just check out my MySpace at www.myspace.com/mrcalifornia. I have way more friends than Keanu Reeves' band, Dogstar.

MRR: That sounds right.

Recent and upcoming
Mr. California releases:

Analingus/Shoot It Up split 7"
(Riff Raff Records) – already out
Vagina Boys 7"
(Kenrock Records) – sold out
Trunculence 7"
compilation of lock grooves (No Part of It Records) – already out
Mr. California and the Flintstone Sound Express *Crazy Toons* 7"
(Ken Rock Records) – already out
Mr. California and J. O'Felony
(My Mind's Eye Records) – coming soon
Vagina Boys "Enemy/Traitor" 45
(Proud to Be Idiot Records) – coming soon
Mr. California and J. O'Felony split 7" with Knife Through Head
(Cock Energy Records) – coming soon
Split CD with Death Hunt
(Jerk Off Records) – coming soon

...ORNIA AND THE STATE POLICE
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...ALINGUS

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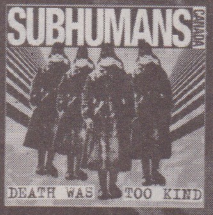

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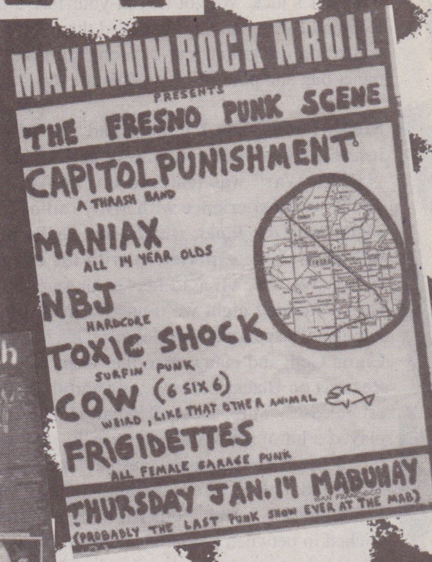
MANIAX


MAXIMUMROCK N ROLL
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MANIAX
ALL 14 YEAR OLDS
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COW (6 SIX 6)
WEIRD, LIKE THAT OTHER ANIMAL
FRIGIDETTES
ALL FEMALE GARAGE PUNK
THURSDAY JAN. 14 MABUHAY
SAN FRANCISCO
(PROBABLY THE LAST PUNK SHOW EVER AT THE MAB)

A little over a year ago, on a hot, sultry, electric Central Valley night, I was prepping for a "Best of Fresno" radio show. Planning to close the show with Think Tank's great What Now 7," *I was delving into Think Tank history on Dale from Capital Punishment's Fresno punk history website. On the website there was a link from Think Tank to this pre-Think Tank incarnation called the Maniax. How had I not heard of this!? I navigated to the Maniax info and read about how they were only 13 or 14 years old and in middle school when they had stuff on the* Not So Quiet on the Western Front MRR *comp and were invited to tour with Black Flag and Flipper. Holy shit! My mind was blown. The only song they ever released was "Off to War" on the* Not So Quiet… *comp, but I saw that they had a 20+ song* Lost Tapes *anthology in the works.*

A year or so later I'm opening the MRR *mail and the Maniax* Lost Tapes *CD comes in for review. I finally get to hear it, and it's beyond great. I contacted Gregg Mitchell from the Maniax/Think Tank and he was kind enough to do an interview. You can check out the Maniax website at www.maniaxmusic.com for more information on the band and you can also get their* Lost Tapes *CD there.*

Fresno Thrash

Interview by Paul Lucich

MRR: Can you give us a brief history of the Maniax, from the pre-Insanez beginnings, to the start of the Maniax?

Gregg: In the fall of 1979, my twin brother Rob and I moved from Boise, ID to Fresno, CA. While we actually grew up in Hermosa Beach, CA, we went from the sand to the mountains to the valley in just a few short years. We started seventh grade at Tenaya Middle School, where we became fast friends with Eric Dansby (drums) and Nich Urbina (guitar), who were forming their band called The Insanez. It was more "new wave" but with a punk edge. If you listen closely, you can pick up riffs we borrowed from The Clash, Plasmatics, among others. Eric and Nich had noticed my writing in class, so they approached me to be the band's lead singer. Of course, I really couldn't sing that well, but hopefully I made up for it in attitude. We kicked out the jams in Nich's rec-room, whipping up catchy, three-chord rave-ups like "Model Baby (Barbie Doll)," "Dead Puppy," "Insane Asylum," and "Fig Rock," our ode to the lovely San Joaquin Valley. While the Insanez never really got out of the family room, we self-released a homemade cassette EP that went over well with our friends who heard it at school.

Then in the summer of 1980, we got more and more into hardcore punk and wanted a harder sound and a more serious stance, so the Maniax rose from the ashes of the Insanez. It was essentially the same group, but faster, harder, and with more overtly socio-political lyrics. At first, it was just me on lead vocals (and penning lyrics), Eric on drums, and Nick on guitar. Then my brother Rob joined the line-up on co-lead vocals—twin powers activate! Form a punk band!

During the summer of '82, for a brief time we hooked up with bassist Eric Holt, a local mod/punk rocker who was a few years older than us. I don't know what ever happened to Eric, but he was a real cool guy.

MRR: The recordings sound blown out and pretty amazing, they appear fresh and each time I listen. Like they know no ends or boundaries or like the newborn Eskimo who sees but the horizon. How did you go about recording?

Gregg: Because we didn't have any money or real budget, it was DIY all the way, and the Maniax sound was strictly lo-tech and lo-fi to say the least. We weren't really a "garage" band but rather a living room band, rehearsing in either Nich's den or Eric's house, like other bedroom punk rockers dotting suburbia in the early '80s. During our improv jam sessions, we just used one of those old school handheld tape recorders plugged into a handheld mic to capture vocals, guitar, and drums all at the same time. We didn't have a bass player, so that helped define our stripped-down Maniax sound—rough, ragged, the sound of things falling apart.

Over the years, many people have asked us: "How did you get that sound for 'Off to War?'"—our track on the *Not So Quiet on the Western Front* comp. We did it all in one take. It was a case of lightning in a bottle or maybe just beginner's luck. We got that in-your-face wailing guitar sound because while Rob and I were singing, I shoved the mic up close to our one amp while Nich wailed on the guitar. For the song's intro, we put some backyard gravel in a paper bag and pounded it to simulate the crunch of troops marching off to war.

MRR: From what I understand, the Maniax began to generate a lot of interest when your songs were getting air play on *MRR* radio, and when "Off To War" was featured on the *Not So Quiet*… comp. Can you talk about your experience with *MRR* radio? You were able to put some of the segues on *Lost Tapes*, which were really interesting to hear. Also, can you talk about your experiences with the compilation?
Gregg: We were all avid fans of those early *Maximum Rocknroll* broadcasts. Every Tuesday night we'd huddle around the radio and got our first taste of indie bands spanning the globe: MDC, Minor Threat, Neos, Fartz, DRI, Crass, Chron Gen, and many more that inspired us to rush down to our local Tower Records on Blackstone Ave. and sort through the punk 7" bins to find the latest releases. Sure, most of what *MRR* played was hardcore, but they also played a lot of other stuff all over the map we'd never heard before. The first time I heard Grandmaster Flash's "The Message" wasn't on urban radio, but *MRR*, and it blew me away: "Sometimes it makes me wonder how I keep from going under…" And another time Killing Joke's "Follow the Leaders" sandwiched in between art-damage thrash. It showed that Tim and the gang had no rules and real eclectic taste. Inspired by the DIY spirit of the bands we heard on *MRR*, we thought, "We can do that!" Just for kicks, we taped a few of our songs on our home tape recorder and mailed our homemade tapes off to *MRR* in the hopes they might play one of our songs. Amazingly, the following week, we were on the air—I think the first song *MRR* played was "Slit Wrists," but they played others, like "Xmas Drone"—and the rest is history. Well, sort of. While we were the first Fresno punk band to send tapes to *MRR* to get radio airplay, other local bands started to send in their own tapes—Capitol Punishment, NBJ, Frigidettes, and more. We kept sending more songs, they kept getting played, and the buzz built. Being that young—we were like 13 or 14 years old—and getting our songs on the radio was just about the biggest thrill ever. To hear Tim Yohannon, Jeff Bale, or Jello Biafra rave about the Maniax on *MRR* was very cool, even if up until that point we had only ever played in our living rooms. Then having our song "Off to War" chosen to be on the *Not So Quiet*… comp was very exciting for us. We couldn't believe it, really—but it made us feel like a real band. I can still recall going to the record store, buying the double LP the day it came out, opening up the shrink-wrap, playing the record on my stereo for the first time, and hearing our song blasting out of the speakers while thumbing through the first issue of *MRR* mag that came with the record. In some ways, "Off To War" was a fluke for us and does and doesn't represent the total Maniax sound, so we've had to live with that track for 25 years, but we were glad it was cherry-picked for the *MRR* comp. We just hope they'll buy our *Lost Tapes* CD so they'll discover the Maniax had many more songs than just that one!

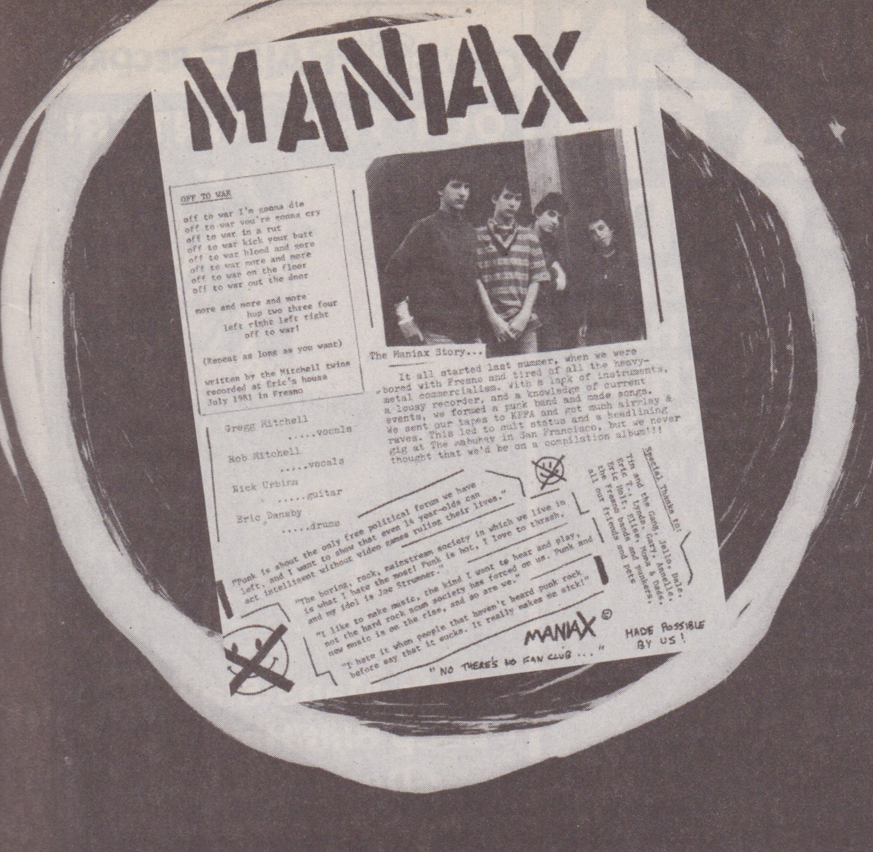
MRR: As far as live shows go, you played your first and last show at SF's the Mab. Can you talk about the Mab show?
Gregg: In January of '82, we headlined the *MRR*-sponsored "All Fresno" gig at the Mab. Sharing the bill with us were Capitol Punishment, Toxic Shock, and NBJ. Anyone who has ever played a gig in front of a packed audience knows the visceral rush of performing live, whether it's 500 or 5,000 people. But it was amazing to us that we were so young, so inexperienced, and yet somehow we got top billing and were now playing in front of a big crowd—well, big to us. We rented a small rehearsal space in SF and practiced for a few hours before the show to get it right. Running on pure adrenalin, we somehow made it through our set with barely a glitch—all except for the fact that Nich had just got a guitar "effects box" as a Christmas present, so much to our horror, he went hog-wild with fuzz and flanger sonics. Still, it was exhilarating to be on stage at such a young age. It all seemed like a blur and was over way too fast, but it was great finally meeting Tim and the gang in the flesh. Our parents even tagged along as "chaperones."

Playing at the Mab was a very special night for us, but also a bit scary, since it was literally our *first* live show ever—and our last. There was a big difference between jamming in the garage in San Joaquin Valley suburbia and performing in front of a packed house of studded-leather skinheads. Playing our first show at the Mab made a major impact on all of us, making us feel part of a real underground movement, since we heard it was one of the last punk shows ever held there. Ironically, we were booked to be on several bills for a handful of local Fresno punk shows (we have the flyers to prove it!), but something always went wrong—the promoter pulled out or the cops shut down the park, etc.

MRR: You've written, "…but to this day, I'm sure my ex-band mates share a nagging sense that we weren't able to quite capitalize on our initial opportunities and realize our full potential… One afternoon during eighth grade, I remember coming home after school and receiving a phone call from seminal noise-punk band Flipper, 'Hey, guys, can you go on tour in Germany'? Our parents, 'You can't, you have a math test tomorrow!'" If you could change anything would you?
Gregg: I'm not sure if we could change—or would change—all that much, as our past experiences, good or bad, make us who we are today. Of course, being so young and only in junior high, we couldn't really do all the things we wanted to do since we were still in school and living at home with our parents. I think if we had to do it over all again, in hindsight, we'd try harder to really capitalize on the opportunities given to us and stick together as a band a bit longer to see how far we could take it. Maybe try to get a record deal, put out our own record, and definitely play more live shows. But for being such young teenagers, I still think we achieved quite a bit for our age, as it all came at us fast and furious.
MRR: Definitely—your songs "Slit Wrists" and "Wendy O." are hits and I also really enjoy "Obscene Phone Call." How did you go about writing?
Gregg: Honestly, most times we didn't formally sit down to write songs. They were much more improv and made up on the spot. We picked up a guitar and a pen and just did it. After school, we'd all meet every week for "band practice," but we never actually "rehearsed" our songs, as our rehearsal itself was our own collaborative writing process. More often than not, instead of bringing fully written songs to the table, our songs evolved in real time from jam sessions. I'd come up with an initial concept, or at least a title for a song, and jot down some lyrics, then we'd jam in Eric's living room until we "found" the song by hammering it out in real time. Or Nich or Eric would sometimes first come up with a riff or beat and I'd start tossing out stuff on the mic or singing stream-of-consciousness over it until an idea or lyric formed. Even though we were just kids, I think we managed to craft some pretty catchy hooks and riffs and explore some edgy ideas beyond our years.

MRR: How did the Maniax come to an end, and can you tell me a little about the transition to Fresno juggernaut Think Tank?
Gregg: Things just ran their course, and eventually the Maniax morphed into what you might call Maniax 2.0, where Rob and I kept the Maniax persona as twin lead singers, but our pal Gary Shuster replaced Nich on guitar, and Rob filled in for Eric on, well not drums exactly. We couldn't afford a drum kit, so Rob literally played drumsticks on a cardboard box while I shouted my lyrics into the mic. Now that's DIY. If you listen to later Maniax tracks like "Stupid Fashion Scam" on the *Lost Tapes* CD, those songs were recorded in the backyard at Gary's house on a hand-held tape recorder, and the "drums" you hear are really Rob playing a box. How much more low-tech can you get?

As I got older, I wanted a change where I could focus on more complex socio-political issues, so Maniax 2.0 soon morphed into Think Tank V.1 as a vehicle for that. I was coming at it more as writer than a singer, although performance was always important to get the message out there. The original early-'80s Think Tank line-up included Gary Shuster on guitar, Scott Vick on bass, Matt Dunlap on drums, and me on lead vocals. Since we were in high school by now, Think Tank was more overly political in its lyrical focus/concept and the song structures were more experimental than before. But the original Think Tank line-up didn't last long. While we played a few shows at Fresno's Knights of Columbus and recorded those early tracks at Dale's Clovis warehouse for ("Jane Fonda Genocide," "Homophobia," etc.), the band soon morphed into Think Tank V.2 with a line-up that featured the late, great Mike Waldhart (RIP) on guitar, Bobby Arias on bass, Matt on drums, and me on lead vocals and lyrics. Prior to joining Think Tank, Mike and Bobby had played in a Madera punk band called Death Camp, and Mike had also done a brief stint as second guitarist in Capitol Punishment. This Think Tank line-up played several local gigs in Fresno and other Cali cities, and we eventually released our



MANIAX

OFF TO WAR

off to war I'm gonna die
off to war you're gonna cry
off to war in a rut
off to war kick your butt
off to war blood and gore
off to war gore and more
off to war on the floor
off to war out the door

more and more and more
hup two three four
left right left right
off to war!

(Repeat as long as you want)

written by the Mitchell twins
recorded at Eric's house
July 1981 in Fresno

Gregg Mitchell
.....vocals
Rob Mitchell
.....vocals
Nick Urbina
.....guitar
Eric Dansby
.....drums

The Maniax Story...

It all started last summer, when we were bored with Fresno and tired of all the heavy-metal commercialism. With a lack of instruments, a lousy recorder, and a knowledge of current events, we formed a punk band and made songs. We sent our tapes to KFPA and got much airplay & raves. This led to cult status and a headlining gig at The Mabuhay in San Francisco, but we never thought that we'd be on a compilation album!!!

Special Thanks to:
Tim and the Gang, Jello, Dale, Eric T., Lynda, Gary, Annelle, Eric Holt, Elise, Moms & Dads, the Fresno bands and punkers, all our friends and pets

"Punk is about the only free political forum we have left, and I want to show that even 14 year-olds can act intelligent without video games ruling their lives."

"The boring, rock, mainstream society in which we live in is what I hate the most! Punk is hot, I love to thrash, and my idol is Joe Strummer."

"I like to make music, the kind I want to hear and play, not the hard rock scum society has forced on us. Punk and new music is on the rise, and so are we."

"I hate it when people that haven't heard punk rock before say that it sucks. It really makes me sick!"

MANIAX ©

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" NO THERE'S NO FAN CLUB ... "

debut 7" EP *What Now?* on Mind Matter Records in 1986, which received positive reviews. Again, Think Tank's sound was more experimental than before. We could go from hardcore thrash to post-punk and even some militant rap/funk tossed in for good measure. As a white boy, I remember "rapping" left-wing lyrics over boombox beats in the early '80s before anyone else was doing it—this was before the Beastie Boys, etc. But as long as audiences were alive and alert, it was all good.

After the Maniax broke up and Think Tank formed, drummer Eric went on to form other cool bands like the Kyber Rifles (in the ska vein of the Specials/Selector) and later Supreme Love Gods, an indie rock band that got signed to Rick Rubin's Def American label and released several well-received CDs in the '90s, and even got their videos played on MTV! Most recently, he's been playing in Fresno-based bands like Bev. As for the Mitchell twins, Rob and I have both been living and working in LA for the past two decades ever since college. Rob is now CFO at Bold Films, an indie film production company in Hollywood. And me? After stints as a magazine editor, talent manager, and film development/production at Sony, I've been working at the Writers Guild of America West for the last five years doing publicity and PR, and made it through this past year's WGA strike!

MRR: What was *Blitz* fanzine?
Gregg: *Blitz* was a little xeroxed zine created by Gary Shuster (guitarist in the original Think Tank line-up) and me in the early '80s. It was less focused on the punk music scene and more on featuring essays on politics and culture and art/media collages, reviews, etc. We soon got distribution through Rough Trade and somehow the zine went around the world even though we were literally making copies of it at Gary's dad's hospital copy machine. You know, we actually met The Clash up close and personal because of *Blitz*. Back in 1984 during the *Cut the Crap* tour when Joe Strummer and Paul Simenon were still touring as The Clash (without Mick Jones), they came to Fresno and played the Warner Palace downtown. Needless to say, we were surprised and amazed that while we were waiting in line to get in, Clash road manager Kosmo Vinyl came up to us and asked us, "Hey, aren't you the guys who put out *Blitz*? Joe is a big fan, and he wants to meet you." To this day, I still don't know how they recognized us, but they took us backstage and suddenly we were hanging out having a beer with Joe, while Paul was grooving with his boombox blasting dub. We couldn't believe that Joe Strummer liked our little zine, much less wanted to meet us. Actually, one of our Maniax songs, "Wanna Be English," is an ode to wanting to be "just like Joe." Too bad he's gone now. RIP Joe.

MRR: Between the Maniax and Think Tank, what were some of your more memorable live experiences?
Gregg: For Maniax, I think we'd all agree it was the Mab show in January of '82 as it was our *first* and *last* gig! As for Think Tank, I can't pick out one show that stood out, but we played many cool gigs at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fresno that went over well, even though the crowds seemed less than…um…receptive to our sound and stance. Good or bad, whenever Think Tank did a live show, there always seemed to be this kind of charge in the air—a palpable sense of tension where the audience directly responded to what we were doing, or were likely more than a little afraid of or uncomfortable with our lyrical content or material. To me, during the '80s punk scene, a lot of hardcore bands back then were all shouting "Fuck Reagan!" blah, blah, blah, but those were such easy, obvious targets. To me, the true essence of punk was shaking things up and not playing it safe, going further than the traditional norms, making people wake up, pay attention, and open their minds, even if it might be a little tense or uncomfortable along the way. I thrived on, and even welcomed, that kind of live-wire atmosphere where you were never quite sure what was going to happen next—you might get a round of applause or a punch in the face, but whatever the outcome, at least the audience was (hopefully) paying attention, engaged, and proactive, not just sitting back passively. The early hardcore scene had an air of danger, a real threat to the establishment, but nowadays what most people assume is "punk" is really just employed as a marketing hook for MTV or a trendy style at Hot Topic to move units, push product, or sell a sensibility. We used to pass around lyric sheets and flyers and use props and other stunts—anything to get the message across.

MRR: Finally, how did the release come about? I know Dale from Capitol Punishment recently re-released the Fresno *Hardcore 84* tape comp as a CD on his label Stagedive Records. How did your *Lost Tapes* release come about?
Gregg: We've actually known Dale since the early '80s when we were just kids, and he's been one of the primary forces and "founding fathers" of the Fresno punk scene since its inception. In the early '80s, I used to write articles and reviews for *The Fresno Bee*, and I interviewed him for a full-page feature I did on the Fresno punk scene back in the day. That was one of the earliest media exposures many in the Valley had to hardcore. And Dale is still one of the key players to keep that punk spirit alive today.

Over the years, we've had Maniax fans from different parts of the world calling us, emailing us, all asking, "What ever happened to the Maniax, where are they now, will they ever release any more music?" For some reason, we seem to have this cult following around the globe. We're amazed by it, and really appreciate that people remember us. So when Eric, Rob, and I reunited a few years ago, we all collectively wondered, "Hey, most people have only heard 'Off to War' off the *MRR* comp, but they've never really heard all our other stuff. So why don't we release a whole Maniax CD to share all of our Maniax songs from the vaults few have ever heard before"? So we sorted through all of our old Memorex tapes we could find to "remaster" the best tracks onto CD for the first time ever. And the end result is the *Lost Tapes* CD released this year.

MRR: Where can people find the album or get a hold you?
Gregg: The best way to find out more about the Maniax, buy our CD, or contact us direct is to check out our website at www.maniaxmusic.com—it's got a detailed history of the band, photos, and flyers from back in the day, as well as MP3 samples of our songs.
You can email us direct at info@maniaxmusic.com. We also just launched our own MySpace Maniax page at: www.myspace.com/maniaxpunk, so check us out there. You can hear some of our songs, check out the reviews, comments, and even become one of our "friends."

For more information regarding Fresno punk history check out: www.geocities.com/punksnax/fresnopunkhistoryintro.html

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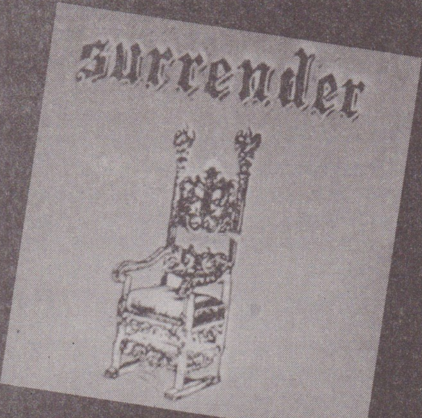

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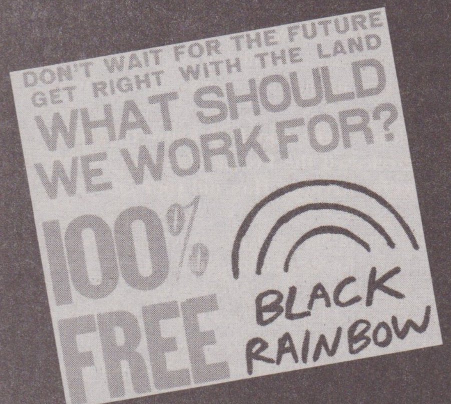
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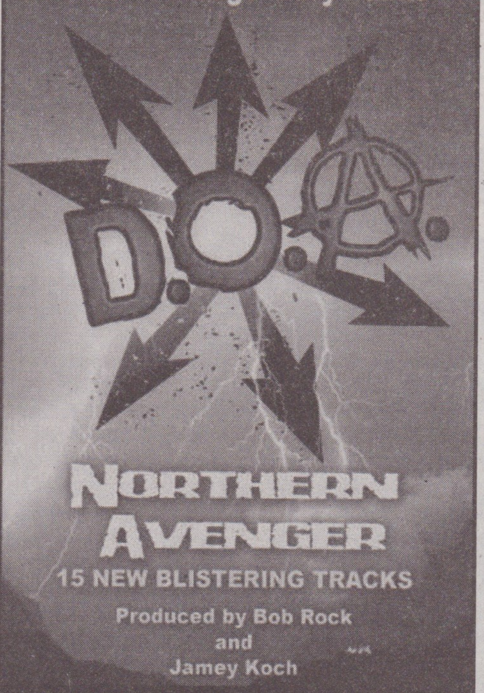
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Squalora is a vile creature from subzero temperatures deep in the abyss and is composed of three major life-stabilizing systems (Matt Svendsen, Tom Elston, and Dan Lawlor). In 1999 they formed a mutual weapon for their frustration and despair in Montana and called it Ass-End Offend. They released four EPs, one LP, and appeared on various compilations. Ass-End Offend toured like mad all over the West Coast and engaged in three full US tours, as well as a jaunt over to Eastern Europe before going into hibernation for a year. When they arose from their slumber they relocated to Portland, Oregon and became a mutated version of the prior endeavor. They have a new LP out on Wäntage / Defector / Repetitively Futile Records and are relentlessly unleashing full-on machete-core destruction!!!

Interview by Tina Trash

Squalora

Portland Distortion

MRR: So guys, first of all, if you could be any other living thing, what would you be and why?

Dan: Probably some kind of ancient, single-celled organism like an amoeba or something in the protozoan family. Life would be simple and short and I wouldn't even be aware of it, all while being a parasite.

Tom: A wolverine for sure—small and playful, yet vicious and very protective.

Matt: A mermaid or a unicorn. Duh.

MRR: How long have you all been playing music and what other bands have you been a part of? What have you taken and learned from these bands?

Tom: I've been active with bands since I was fourteen when I sang in a band called the Vagrants. I've learned a lot through being in bands—tolerance and how to work with others while writing music and coordinating enough money and energy to tour and release records. When people don't wanna pay to get into a show or pay for a record, I just wanna say, "we're not even coming close to breaking even already, fuck you." But all in all it's worth it and carries its own rewards. These guys are my best friends and we have fun.

Matt: I have been irritating the people around me with obnoxious noise since I started playing guitar at age eleven. I was in The Anti Difrancos, Venal i.v., and we were all in Ass-End Offend. Dan and I played together in a band called Nazgul for a few months. I have learned so much about myself and have met a lot of awesome friends. Also, touring in a band is a huge lesson in patience…[*nudging band mates with elbow*]

Dan: In the mid-'90s my brother Matt started to play drums for what became Disgruntled Nation. At the time, I was basically just a stoner hippie or something. When I started to go to these shows Disgruntled Nation put on in our small-ass town, I became instantly enamored with what was going on. I felt that there was something honest and officially original happening, something that you could do yourself and kind of say "fuck you" to all the bullshit that comes with growing up in a small northwestern town off the radar. I ended up going on tour with Disgruntled Nation, and I even filled in on drums for two shows when my brother was on tour in California in 1999. I guess I'm giving all the credit to those guys and the Missoula bands like Humpy and Sputniks. Right around 1997 I started playing drums in the Miscreants, which lasted for a few years until Ass-End Offend formed. Noting that Disgruntled Nation continued on, somewhat, and is expected to play at this year's Total Fest in Missoula, MT. They haven't played since 2002. We are playing that as well.

MRR: What inspires each of you to play the type of music that you do?

Matt: Playing punk rock is the most therapeutic thing for me. It is the best cure for all the frustration I have with this stupid fucking world. I love many different styles of music, everything from Patsy Cline to Poison Idea to Prince! If I believed everything is wonderful and the whole world is happy, then I would listen to the soundtrack of ignorance like most people in our society. There is so much to take action against and get pissed off about that hardcore is the natural path. On the other hand, there is also so much hardcore that I can't fucking stand. How did all this macho and nationalist bullshit end up in the same genre as us? We are supposed to be a counter culture, not a watered down subculture that caters to yuppies and bigots! Can we just start calling that shit "jock core" instead!? If I had to make up a genre to describe us I would call it "machete-core," and yes that's a fucking threat!!

Tom: This is what still moves me. I like hearing our speakers bursting and watching Dan hit his shitty drums as hard as he can. This music is a projection of every thought and emotion and the energy that stems from it is what simply satisfies me.

Dan: Seriously, I don't know what else I would be doing. I like a lot of different random music and forms of expression, but when it comes down to it I'm stuck in this punk DIY or DIT (do-it-together) thing for life, I suppose.

MRR: How do you think your lives have affected your music and how has punk affected your lives?

Tom: Our anger is liberally added to each and every song. This music transformed me into a more conscience person. You know growing up in small town Montana and already feeling extremely alienated, it was hard for me to find any niche. Punk gave me a positive outlet and some great relationships, of which I will forever treasure.

Matt: Life has a direct affect on the music one plays. As for how it has affected me, I am certainly more aware of the state of hopelessness that blankets us in a capitalist system that is hell-bent on its imperialist agenda, no matter what the cost. Punk has taught me how to fight back and how to keep what's left of my sanity!

Dan: I come from a large family that lasted until about 1996 when the whole divorce thing happened, and from there it was a very intricate learning process for all of us. Music was something that my brothers and mom and dad and I could always share. My dad was always supportive of us having shows in the garage as long as we kept things somewhat in order. Really, he had to say yes, 'cause we would have done it anyway…love you pops. I think we might still owe him for that smashed out window. Putting on shows, making fliers, and walking around posting them wherever around town is something that makes my youth stand out to me. That is what we would do in our small town. That is what I want to continue to do, because I know that there is a whole shit-load of people out there that understand and are supportive of this whole thing.

MRR: What have you put into Squalora and what would you like to see happen in the future for the band?

Matt: Squalora is everything I anticipated after Ass-End Offend, which really is pretty much the same band. We've been playing together for eight years. It is the ultimate release for me, to get on stage and scream in everyone's faces for 30 minutes, and it reminds us that not all communication needs to be made through superficial computer screens!

Dan: It's relieving to know that I still have people to play music with when I think about all the other bullshit things in life. I go to my job everyday, but I know that it is not the only thing I have going for me. I assume that we will continue to play shows, tour, and put out records so long as we scrounge up all the necessary elements to make those things happen.

Tom: I love being able to write any riff or sing anything I want and get positive feedback. We all respect each other's ideas and talents. I want to put out records that we are 100% about. In the past we were always rushed in the studio or just trying to get a record out before tour, and now I wanna let things materialize at a bit slower pace and feel completely right.

MRR: What is the meaning of Squalora exactly?

Matt: It means the epitome of squalor. It's also the name of an Antarctic fish that scientists have so far only found the skeletal remains. This describes us pretty well, being constantly overlooked and coming from the freezing and dismal state of Montana.

MRR: When did you move to Portland? How quickly was the band's formation after you all moved here and how has Portland affected each of you?

Tom: I've been in Portland for two years now and my life has never been better. I work at a fantastic non-profit, and I met my beautiful wife Christina here. We've been playing good shows and continue to get blown away by great local bands.

Matt: I moved out two years ago. It has been sort of slow getting everything established here. Portland is great though. There is so much more of a support system built into the punk scene here. It really is an autonomous scene. Everyone is actually nice to each other, for the most part, and there is a lot of camaraderie. I've lived in Montana for the past 27 years and I grew up on a farm out in the middle of nowhere, so living in a city is obviously a big change.

Dan: I came to Portland in July of 2006. When I finally arrived in P-town Tom and Matt saved me a spot on the drum stool. Everything was pretty smooth thanks to our good friend Woody who let us practice in his basement and all the support we got from friends we made in the past. I've acclimated well because I told myself, "move away from home or be discontent thinking about it for too long." It was a great change for me.

MRR: Can you describe the sound of Squalora's first album and what was the process like putting it together?

Dan: More *doooomy* hardcore from these three jackoffs who still pretend that someone actually gives a shit…hehe. Really though, this was actually the most rewarding release I've ever been a part of. I think we all knew that we wanted to make something better than what we did in the past.

Tom: I think the recording came out very natural and represents us accurately. Mike Lastra has a way recording what's there. I personally dread recording, but love hearing the final mix. It was also fun sitting down and watching Matt design the cover and insert and seeing it all come together.

Matt: We did a lot of layering with guitar tracks and experimented with some different sounds. To describe our sound, I use the following summation: a cross between getting stabbed in the ear with a rusty sickle, having an aneurysm while being run over by a gravel truck, and all your favorite hits from the '80s played backwards, full of subliminal messages. We're talkin' spandex, hairspray, and leg warmers drenched in fucking blood from stomping on the heads of riot cops in the streets of Portland!

MRR: What sets you aside from other bands in the Portland punk scene?

Tom: We are just a component of a huge and diverse scene.

Matt: There is a common misconception about the Portland scene, that we all either sound like Tragedy or Discharge. The fact is there are just as many variations as well as similarities between bands as in any town. If anyone thinks all Portland bands sound the same, they should check out Adelitas, Upshit Creek, Deterrorformed, and Anon Remora. Just because we're in the same scene as His Hero Is Gone and Dystopia doesn't mean that we are all trying to sound like them, ahem, hipster fuckwads at *Vice*, suck it!. We moved here from a pretty isolated place with a really small scene. And I think there is a lot of originality in small scenes because there is such little substance for influence. Everything we've done, we've built ourselves. In Montana, DIY is not a choice, because there is no other choice.

Dan: I'd like to think we are part of it and not so much set aside. I know what I like and that there is a lot of it in good ol' Portland. I'm excited when people show us a good time when we come out and play shows...now about that tour thing.

MRR: Can you tell me your favorite memories of playing in Ass-End Offend?

Tom: My favorite memories are releasing our first 7" and reading the first good review. Touring was always fun as well. Our good friend Blimpie lighting his dick on fire and then later shooting bottle rockets out of his dick in Madison, WI on the 4th of July in 2004 is something that I will never forget. What a night!

Dan: Getting to go to Eastern Europe was definitely the high point. Let's just say the show I booked in Salt Lake that was supposed to be Twin Falls was a learning experience (oh, and eight hours in the wrong direction).

Matt: Stepping off the plane in Warsaw and telling myself I would be a fool to return to the US, playing at Zabadaks in Kuldiga, Latvia was also a monumental event. Zabadaks is a youth center that also acts as sort of a free hostel and it is pretty much the venue that most punks dream about. Also, narrowly avoiding getting shot in the face when we were in Pocatello was pretty awesome. Losing the transmission in the middle of nowhere in Tennessee is always a favorite.

MRR: As Squalora, what is the most memorable show and what bands would you like to play or tour with in the future?

Dan: Getting to play the first Resist show in fourteen years was pretty cool. An official tour is still something to discuss. Anyone interested? Give us a jingle.

Matt: We played in Arcata, CA last year and it was a blast. We were the only band that played, but it was at this house called the Firehouse. We had a West Coast tour planned, and it was the only show that didn't fall through. We had car trouble and had to limp home from our one-day tour, but the people at that house showed us a really awesome time. California knows how to fuckin' party!

Tom: Playing back in Missoula was fun for our release party. It's always good to see old friends coming out and throwing pine combs at you. I want to play with any and all the bands that I can. I really like playing mixed shows. It gets old playing with three crust/metal bands. I like diversity and authentic DIY spirited music. I like hearing fresh ideas and getting blown away.

MRR: The lyrics on this album are as political as they were from Ass-End Offend, but to me they seem a bit more personal... when do you most feel inspired to write? How do your songs come about?

Matt: Our songs are a direct result of a lifetime of panic attacks and depression caused by the politics of our environment: living far below the poverty line, living in a country based on vanity, the knowledge that our government is killing innocent people, being surrounded every day by ignorant selfish fucking jerks, the list goes on and on, and it is all both personal and political.

Tom: The lyrics that I contribute are more dark and personal. I work in the social field and hear a lot of depressing stories and see a lot of corruption in people's lives. I usually write lyrics late at night after dwelling on some specific incident for hours. Lately writing in this format has been slower, because it's hard to write about so much negativity.

Dan: It comes in spats, usually late at night or while I'm at work.

MRR: We all know that the only constant in life is change (for good or bad), so how have your lives changed and how have those changes affected your beliefs?

Matt: One huge change in my life happened eleven years ago when my daughter was born. This had a dramatic impact on me, and I mean she saved my fucking life. I was destined to be living in the gutter, but she brought focus to my life. I had to grow up really fast and make better decisions. Every day since then has been a step in the right direction.

Dan: I always see these people who get into punk for a few quick years and then decide for whatever reasons that they have "grown up" or "moved on." I see that as people not being confident enough in their own convictions to stick with something they truly find satisfaction in. I find that by getting older, I just want to do more and that I'm never doing enough. Everyday is a fucking challenge to keep our sanity in this crazy backwards world. When we see every bad situation as a reason to cave in, then I think "they" have won. I guess I just want to "stay punk and stay pissed" to put it tritely.

Tom: I've changed a lot, but still continue to find myself and recently getting married has changed my selfish scope. I appreciate nature more and more and want to be in the woods all of the time. I want to thank all of my friends and family for all of the support over the years and to new friends in Portland. Also the Community Warehouse for providing such support and inspiration, as well as employment and a practice space. Thanks for your time!!

Matt: Also thanks to Hell Mary and PDX Press for the photos in this interview and everyone who's helped us set up shows and shown support.

squalora

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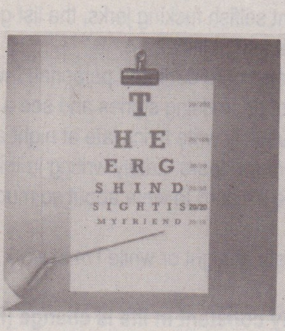
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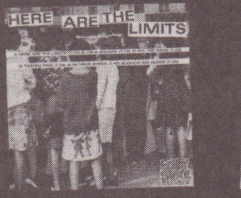
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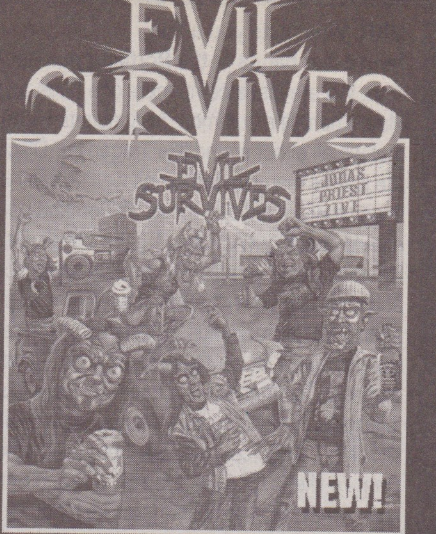
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mind eraser

A feature by: John Policastro

I'm running late. I am always running late, it seems. But in this instant, I expect Justin De Tore to be even later, and he doesn't deceive me. I'm standing outside a thin, haggard door hanging ajar—well worn and rusted yellow paint chips to the floor, with each knock upon it using the back of my knuckles, leaving a lead laden pile resembling old, rotted fruit around a weeping tree. Freshly scrawled in black paint across the door, like a sash around a grotesque contestant: "Mute Nostril Agony."

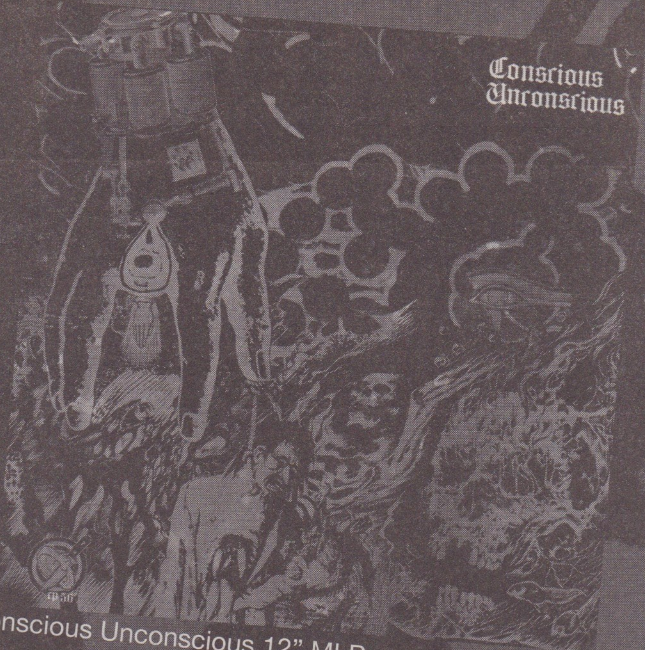
After a half-dozen knocks, the door to De Tore's Boston area dwelling has slowly swung open into an eerie welcoming position, where I am greeted by a haphazard smattering of Starbucks latté cups dryly laying idle. "On the road," guitarist Christopher Corry has warned me before, "if you ignore the words 'Can you pull over at that Star-bo's?' you can pretty much guarantee yourself to be without a vocalist that night." I have prepared myself, with two Ventis for Justin that will surely tally to the towering pillar-esque pile of ivory white and forest green that he has erected in only a matter of days.

After 15 minutes, I am still waiting on Justin, scrambling to find any other notes I may have jotted down on the way over. With Mind Eraser ready to unleash two beastly releases since their sophomore effort, Glacial Reign, there are many questions posed, yet far fewer answered. One release is a two-song 12" on Clean Plate entitled Conscious Unconscious, another, a ten-song 7" on Youngblood Records called The Prodigal Son Brings Death, a record Corry has publicly professed to being heavily influenced by Vangelis' score to Blade Runner. "I just call them Use Your Illusion 3 and Use Your Illusion 4," longtime friend and collaborator Derek Scace says to me with a sly smirk, as he sits on a beaten and frayed loveseat next to the ominous jaundiced door. I hadn't even noticed him in the room the entire time I was there. However, I also have no time to wonder why he didn't bother answering the door in the first place, because Justin has just arrived behind me, draining a latté and holding the day's fan mail snuggly nestled between his bicep and ribs.

He tears at the sides of a few envelopes and cool-ly blows the fresh tears wide open and extracts the letters mechanically with his forefinger and middle finger. He then unfolds them with a snap of his wrist, as if they were scrolls, with one hand, soy latté in the other, as his eyes swiftly pierce heavy-handed Bic-scribbled words. "Looks like they're still 'backing us' with slack-jawed hyperbole and cumbersome salutations." De Tore whispers listlessly to me. We haven't even made eye contact yet.

"Bunch-a dim reapers they are," Brendan Radigan smugly spits out as he enters through the threshold without even touching the door. A native and nonchalant Englishman from a small fishing town called Hawk-shire, a town that has long been (and bizarrely so) a Pro-American region in England. Radigan spent the majority of his boyhood and early teenage years casting off of rickety docks and rowdy rum-filled boats out in charming but choppy ocean for days at a time. Soon after, he found himself and his fishing rod under grey skies on the other side of the Atlantic in New Bedford, Massachusetts. "Guess I found out there really are more fish in the sea, didn't I?" Radigan quips. Behind him, bassist Craig Arms crisply spits out, "Where the fuck is Corry, man?" and enters the room in a white-knuckled fury. Born and bred to be a farmer on farmland in rural Massachusetts, Arms carries himself with more of a sadistic swagger typically instilled in a lumberjack. "Looks like he's mailing this one in again," Justin answers back as he continues scouring through the days mail, which still has his undivided attention. Corry has a legendary and infamous habit of canceling on practices via snail mail weeks in advance without telling anyone. Yet he is always careful to ensure every envelope he sends to his band contains a video introduction to practice explicitly detailing what is expected as well. Audiocassettes containing his parts for practice, as well as the skeletons of future Mind Eraser songs are also included along with a practice set list, picked by Corry himself.

Corry at Home



Conscious Unconscious 12" MLP

"Mentally, I sometimes feel that my being doesn't carry a physical importance at practice," Corry has written to me in a letter that I too received dated weeks in advance. "But if I can include tangible tapes, that can also physically stand in for me, so that what I mentally have prepared to physically play is still able to reach out to the rest of the guys, mentally, in a form they can physically play on the recorder as well as the instruments, then I can physically take care of other mental matters that need me, physically, down the road. Mentally, I find it a better way to physically rest at night." "He doesn't really believe in e-mail, which I think is fucking stupid," Arms says.

(NOTE: When questioned on the touchy subject, Corry leans back on the futon in the corner of his cramped Brighton bedroom, "Listen, the title of the new 12" is Conscious Unconscious. That's not just a clever name that I thought of, Carl Jung referred to a theory of an Objective Psyche in some of his writings—that there was, like, a common unconscious mind connecting all of us. Like if 'I' cancel practice to go on a mission with Cooch, we're all the ones who've canceled it, not just me. I'm just doing what we've all decided as a part of the whole cosmic beyond that nets us together, you know? We all canceled practice, and we only canceled it because of that Objective Psyche that we are a part of already knew it would be canceled, because we were gonna cancel it... The other guys, sometimes they have trouble with stuff like this, you know? Not everyone is born to think outside the box, some people have to work for it, and that can be tough—for them and me. It can be a curse sometimes, when you've just seen too much of the big picture, it's like: 'What can I do with this knowledge? How can I live like I'm one of them when I see so much more?' It's those times I have to remember that a lot of people are counting on me, and that I've got to do it for them as much as myself. Those are the times when I really realize how lucky I am.")

"Through rain, sleet, or snow we can depend on him to cancel, can't we?" Radigan shrugs.

De Tore, who had fostered a continued, yet heavy silence through polite slurps of the soy lattés I had bought for him, mentions how important Corry is, even down to his lyrics, whom Justin said they are also dedicated to, because he was his "editor." "He goes through it and takes out all the 'fucks' and 'shits,'" Justin said, grinning. Radigan looked at him and said, "Mark Twain's wife did that, too."

Like most bands, Mind Eraser isn't too quick to go into details about their last tour. (I'm finding they aren't too quick to talk about anything regarding their work.) There were the stories that slowly seeped out, primarily surrounding Justin's unpredictable, erratic behavior.

De Tore had fought (and lost) hard to include an eternal flame to be placed in front of him on stage for Mind Eraser's last US tour. It became a reality only until it was about to be placed into the van. "He kept telling me how 'heavy' and 'eternal' it was going to be and it would be like a pagan ritual, placing our work on a pyre to 'The Blessing,'" Arms recalls. "But then I had to point out to him that we'd have an exposed fucking flame sitting in the van, which could have blown us all the fuck up!" It was left on the side of a road off I-93. "Where it burns," De Tore whispers, "eternally." "We really snuffed out that plan, didn't we?" Radigan hisses.

De Tore's actual performances were captivating, and terrifyingly unpredictable all at the same time. He created a furor in Toronto when he stopped the band in the middle of their set and shouted to a rather stunned crowd, "You're all a bunch of fucking graves"! Occult rumors swirled in the cauldrons of gossip circles over a show in Bredberg, Tennessee, where De Tore writhed and contorted like a one-man exorcism until he was swaddled in his own sweat. He then stood motionless, as a damp, dense circle of bodies stomped around the room. "He just fuckin' stood there, man, watching this scene he had just created and then calmly pointed his index finger outwards towards the crowd," Arms recalls.

What happened next, even Joey Silvia, a quiet, plump Communist/Portuguese immigrant that Mind Eraser took out on the road with them, could never have dreamed he'd ever see. "Sweat just begin dripping off Justin's finger, like a dropper dispensing medicine to children.

DeTore's Eternal Flame

The kids keep running in circles and looking at Justin the whole time and sticking their tongues out to catch the drops of sweat from Justin finger." Silvia's head drops like his chin is chained to an anvil and he begins scratching at the portrait of Hugo Chavez that he has tattooed on the side of his neck. "It was fucking rock and roll!" he exclaims.

Arms remembers the event a bit less fondly: "Yeah, that was only the second song and then Corry had us keep on playing the same note for another fifteen minutes, and then the show got shut down." Arms carries such anger in his anecdote it's almost as if the event is happening again in front of him, before growling at me with fiery eyes, "That's why Waste Management is my real racket." De Tore doesn't wax poetic about this event either, treating the past like it's one grand ghost story about a kindred soul he doesn't know or have any emotion towards. "I've always been attracted to ideas that were about revolting against authority. I like ideas about the breaking away or overthrowing of established order. I am interested in anything about revolt, disorder, chaos—especially activity that seems to have no meaning."

It was, however, the biggest debacle of the tour, when De Tore himself, disappeared from tour for almost three months, two months after their final date. "A lost weekend to find myself, really," Justin explains. "A weekend to lose his mind, wasn't it?" Radigan interjects. "Shut the fuck up Brendan, it's getting old," Arms screams.

We do know that he boarded a flight to Boston with Jason Clegg, owner of the flourishing record imprint Eating Rats and former singer of Think I Care. Clegg has also been dogged by persistent rumors that he is actually the gorilla-masked frontman of DFJ's side project, Dead Black, namely because he has conspicuously been absent from the crowd at every show so far. (This interviewer, on assignment, asked him that very question, blankly, at Sound and Fury '08 in Santa Barbara, California. "Oh no! I missed that band with the guy who has a gorilla mask and throws dollar bills and permanent-marker-scribbled plain T-shirts into the crowd?! I may as well turn around and fly all the way back home," he responded to me with sincerity as he held a trash bag stuffed with currency and jogged for a cab waiting to take him to the airport.)

They were first spotted in Boston moments after the Boston Celtics won their first NBA Championship since 1986, wearing subtle disguises; gigantic foam ten-gallon cowboy hats, oversized green plastic sunglasses in the shape of shamrocks and matching green foam fingers fashioned into a "#1" position. Cops and paparazzi alike chased after them when Clegg, allegedly on a dare by De Tore, had scaled a downtown Dunkin Donuts with a can of orange spray paint and crudely changed the sign to say "Funkin GoNuts," before disappearing into the night. Not much more is known except for the paper trail left behind. We know now that they boarded a first-class flight to Paris, France early the next dawn where they check into a $60-a-day room at the fashionable Georges V Hotel and began to explore the city—visiting the haunts of Left Bank existentialists, mingling with gypsies, performing on the streets of Montmartre, making pilgrimages to Balzac's home, Napoleon's tomb, and the catacombs. After being spotted drinking soy lattés at numerous sidewalk cafés and bistros, De Tore decided he needed a steady place to grab a latté ("I need my 'Starbo-hydrates,' he chuckles). The bistro, which was named Beastro, garnered a heavy buzz among the hip Parisian jet setters. Unfortunately, mere hours after they closed for the night after their grand opening, Beastro was engulfed in flames and burned beyond repair. The culprit—a dastardly gust of wind, and an eternal flame that De Tore insisted on having placed on the outdoor patio. Finally, a somber and despondent De Tore made front-page news when a hotel maid performing daily house cleaning discovered a motionless and unresponsive De Tore in a tepid tub of water in the bathroom. In a desperate panic, she called for an ambulance. Later it was discovered Justin had simply fallen asleep in the tub. He was asked to leave the hotel and soon after caught a plane back to Boston, where we find ourselves right now.

Mind Eraser can be a seen as a group of paradise seekers who find that their paradise is merely an epic (and sometimes eternal) journey of total liberation. "Mentally, I find the keys to my kingdom quicker than the set I use in my physical world," Corry tells me. When asked where he sees Mind Eraser in five years, Corry lets out a heavy sigh, looks to the ceiling and then directly back at me, "Wherever Dead Black is in ten."

the nixe

Holland's Nixe gained worldwide notice in collector circles during the Killed by Death explosion, particularly with their appearance on the Killed by Epitaph double LP, as a photo of one of the members looking rather menacing appeared on the sleeve. To me, they embody the best aspects of the late-'70s Dutch punk sound, with its mixture of clear political engagement and expressions of utter boredom over uncomplicated, scrubby, dry punk rock. Perhaps more so than almost any other band of the era, The Nixe sang about the ordinary, the quotidian, the everyday and managed to capture how punk rock itself could enable a change in what was the otherwise rather banal existence for a young person in the late '70s. Punk meant a new point of view, an action. Their songs about relations between men and women, probably because of their quotidian nature, managed to approach the issues in a novel way, without resorting to cliché or slogans. But their music's clarion simplicity also demonstrated the do-it-yourself ethos of punk-that no one but you could change your everyday life-and demonstrated that learning to play came second, after having fun. All the band's recordings, including several unreleased tracks, were recently released on LP in a handsome gatefold by France's Pollymaggoo Records. I caught up with some of the members-along with Jeroen Vedder, a Dutch punk historian who wrote the liner notes for the LP-via email over the summer.

Interview by Stuart Schrader

MRR: What inspired The Nixe to form? Was forming an all-women band a conscious decision in response to what was already available in the punk scene? Were you inspired by other bands (from Holland or other countries) with women members?

Nikki: My introduction to punk was in a club called RASA where I was a volunteer. In May 1977 the Ramones and Talking Heads played there. I liked the Talking Heads, but absolutely hated the Ramones. It took another year for me to "get it."

The main reason was that I knew these guys (Gerben and Lex from the Lullabies and Ton who was in the Duds) who had become punks and were the most obnoxious and irritating people around. But at least they created a stir in the stoned hippy environment of those days, and that was something I could relate to.

Ilva and me wanted to start a band like our (then) boyfriends in the Lullabies, just to have fun. We asked our friend Marian because she could play "Smoke On The Water" and "House Of The Rising Sun," which made her a real virtuoso in our eyes.

There was no real inspiration from other girl bands. I mean, we loved Patti Smith, but she was on a completely different level. We just wanted to have our little punk band.

Marian: I was more inspired by men playing guitar. I'm very sorry, but my inspiration at the time came from the hippy scene. Bob Dylan and people like that. But I always liked dancing to the Sex Pistols. Dolly Parton, Blondie, or "Gloria" by either Them or Patti Smith were others I used to request. Later on I started to like more punk rock bands, but they never really inspired me. Not that they weren't good, far from it, but I was more guided by my lack of skills. Playing with Ilva and Nikki seemed very exciting. Just trying to make music. Punk was never a goal, but it gave us an opportunity to play.

MRR: What was Utrecht like in the late '70s/early '80s? You sang "Boring City," but it seems to me that the punk scene must have been exciting. What was the political situation? Did punks have trouble with the police? Was squatting important in Utrecht?

Nikki: There was always this cat and mouse game with the police. They didn't really know what to do with us, and we had something to rebel against. Squatting was very important. It gave us a place to live.

MRR: What bands did The Nixe play gigs with? What bands were your favorites? Did you receive support from The Ex or other bands?

Nikki: Initially we played with the Lullabies. Later on with other bands from Utrecht as well. You know-Rakketax, Bizon Kidz, Noxious, etc. We also played with The Ex. Support from other bands was mainly that we could use their equipment and share rehearsal space. Because of the many gigs all over the country, we were able to buy our own stuff later on.

Marian: We also got a lot of support from Hi-Jinx en de Straks.

MRR: What was Rock Against? Who organized this label? Did the label do more than release records? What's the story of the label? What is the story behind the *Live at Parkhof* LP? What about *Rock Tegen de Rollen*?

Nikki: I think Jeroen can better answer that one.

Jeroen: Rock Against was a very loose congregation, not an actual label as such. Everyone was allowed to use the name. But it did make the scene look more coherent to the outside world.

The Parkhof was a club/squat in Alkmaar that was threatened with closure at the time. In protest a festival was organized, and the recordings made that day turned into an album. I distinctly remember some bands being very unhappy with this release and accused the organizers of not having had permission for the release of some tracks.

Rock Tegen De Rollen was a Dutch "Rock Against Sexism" type festival in which Marian was involved.

MRR: What was your reaction to the beginning of the hardcore punk movement? Did you find it to be macho and unwelcoming? What led to the end of The Nixe? Did you feel that you were treated as sex objects by men in the punk scene?

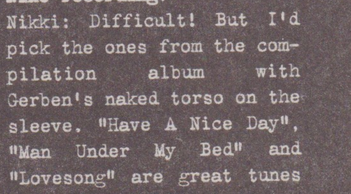
Marian: I never experienced things as "sexist," maybe I was naive.

Nikki: The macho thing never bothered me, as I was rather macho myself. Any guy who felt the need to take me on was welcome to give it a try.

Marian: We quit because we no longer had time to come up with new stuff. We were always doing gigs and just repeating the some songs over and over.

MRR: Why did you decorate your 7" EP sleeves individually? How many did you make? How long did it take to decorate them?

Nikki: Having a sleeve done seemed like a lot of trouble, and as Marian and Ilva both worked at a elementary school, they figured the could let the children make them (ouch, child labor!) We did another 450 at home under the influence of some red wine and vodka. It took about a day, and you can tell the one's we did at the end by lines like "I can't think of anything else" or "how about some pizza?"



MRR: What is your favorite Nixe recording?

Nikki: Difficult! But I'd pick the ones from the compilation album with Gerben's naked torso on the sleeve. "Have A Nice Day", "Man Under My Bed" and "Lovesong" are great tunes that I still like to hear.

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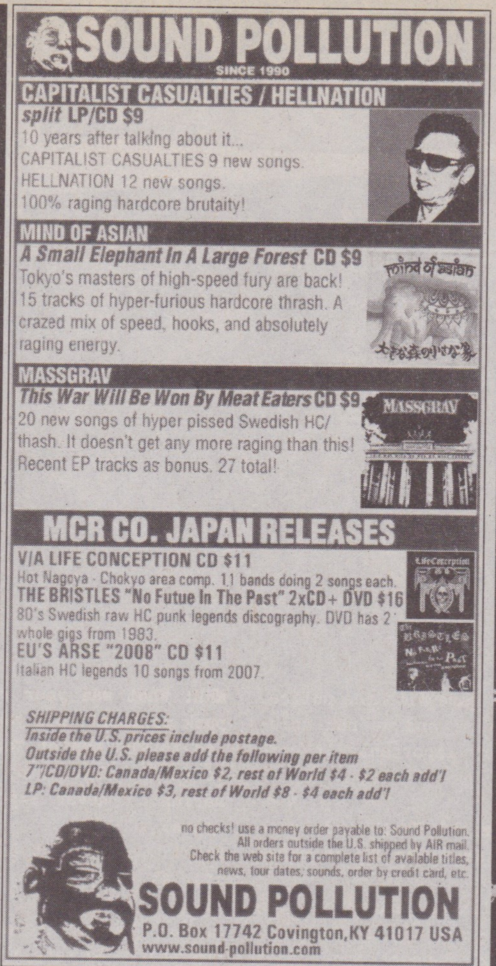

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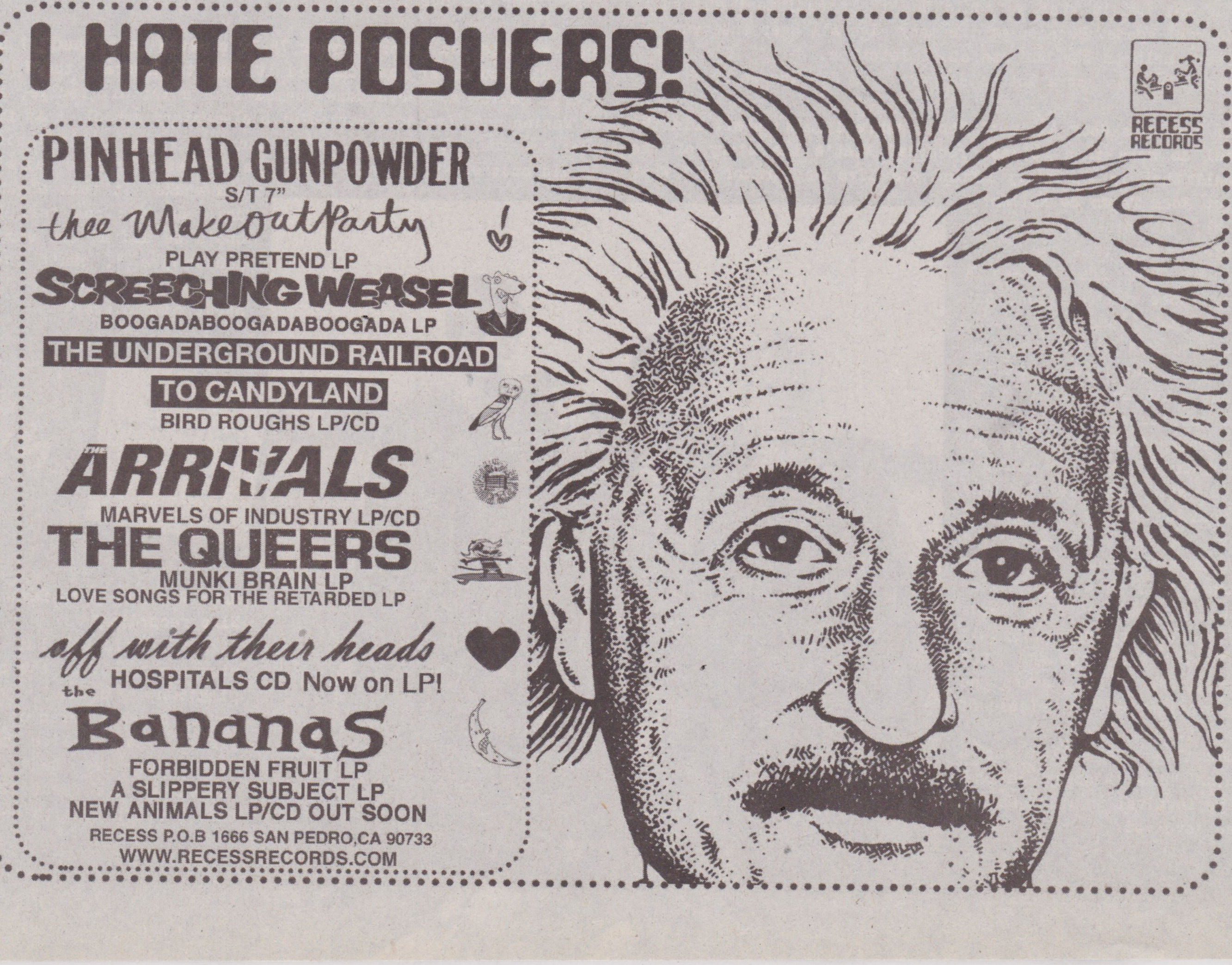

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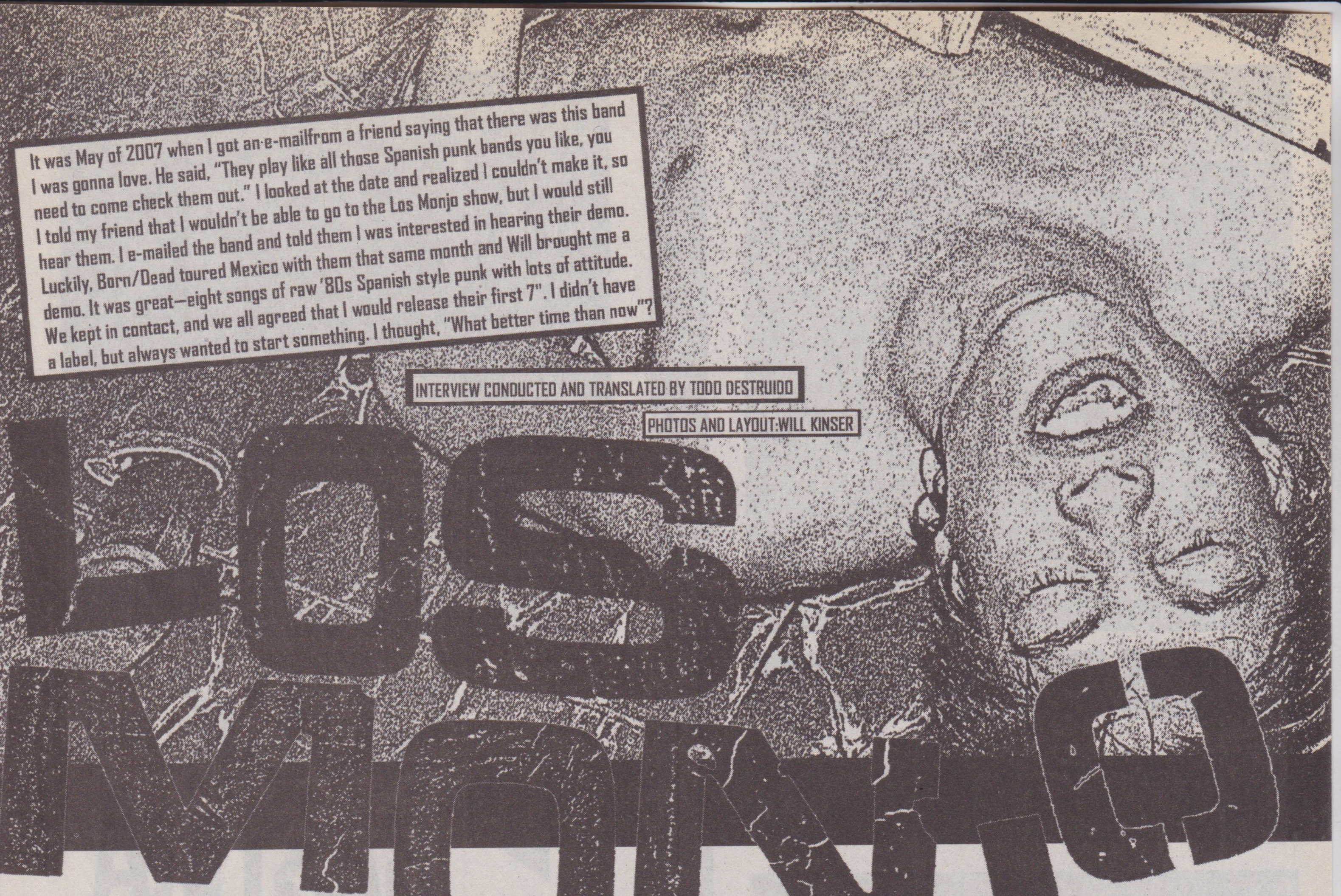

It was May of 2007 when I got an·e-mailfrom a friend saying that there was this band I was gonna love. He said, "They play like all those Spanish punk bands you like, you need to come check them out." I looked at the date and realized I couldn't make it, so I told my friend that I wouldn't be able to go to the Los Monjo show, but I would still hear them. I e-mailed the band and told them I was interested in hearing their demo. Luckily, Born/Dead toured Mexico with them that same month and Will brought me a demo. It was great—eight songs of raw '80s Spanish style punk with lots of attitude. We kept in contact, and we all agreed that I would release their first 7". I didn't have a label, but always wanted to start something. I thought, "What better time than now"?

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED AND TRANSLATED BY TODO DESTRUIDO

PHOTOS AND LAYOUT:WILL KINSER

LOS MONJO

MRR: First off, names and what you do in the band?

Peter: I play guitar, Rene play bass, Cesar plays drums, and Tucho does the vocals.

Tucho: This is the original line-up and that's how it will stay. If one day we need someone else, the only requirement is the last name, Monjo.

MRR: When did you guys start the band?

Peter: Well the band started playing in the winter of 2003, although we planned on making a band a few years before that.

Tucho: I guess 1998 we had the idea of forming the band. That's around the time we started listening to punk.

MRR: Wait, how old are you guys?

Peter: I'm 25, Tucho is 25, Rene is 23, and Cesar is 28.

MRR: How did you get the name, Los Monjo?

Tucho: We had some names in mind, Los Chicos de Barro, Los Explosivos, Los Eskarlata, etc...

Peter: After breaking our heads trying to figure out a band name, we decided what better name for a band than our birth given last name, Monjo.

MRR: How are you all related?

Peter: Tucho, Cesar, and Rene are all brothers, and I am their cousin.

MRR: Have you played outside of your hometown Guadalajara?

Tucho: We toured Mexico with Born/Dead from California.

Peter: Yeah, we have played in Matamoros, Salamanca, Leon, San Luis, DF, Queretaro, Aguascalientes, and other nearby towns.

MRR: I've seen you guys play in your hometown, but how were you all received in other areas of Mexico?

Peter: It was strange, not a lot of people are accustomed to our style of music or attitude...So lots of people just stared at us before we played. After a couple songs people got into it-well some did and some didn't.

Tucho: It was like playing out first show all over again.

MRR: What do you all think of more bands trying to tour Mexico?

Peter: It's great. Most bands that come here are really good and have lots of musical talent (something we lack). The bad part is the money situation. Lots of people are very poor around here and can't afford to pay the cover, so bands don't end up getting paid enough. That makes it veryhard for bands to tour Mexico.

MRR: Any plans on touring the USA?

Peter: Yeah, It's been brought up in the band for about a year now. The hard part, like everyone knows, is the Visas (passport).

MRR: How hard is it to get one?

Peter: For poor people like us, it's almost impossible. The people who approve them always think your trying to get one to work in the USA, but that's not the case. We try and explain that, but you know how they can be. Were trying to get a permission that works for a couple of days as musicians, and if that doesn't work...we'll just fuck with the immigration officers for a while (ha ha!).

MRR: What about Europe?

Peter: You don't need one to go there, but you do need a lot of money, so the situation is the same if not worse...but we do want to play in distant and old lands as soon as we can. Maybe we can tour together with another band over there to make a bit easier.

ROCK BASURA

Tucho: Yeah, if someone would offer and help book the tour, I'm sure we would do it.

MRR: What other bands would you guys recommend people from other countries to hear?

Tucho: Putas Mierdas and Basca Urbana.

Peter: Atake Obrero and Dias de Radio also. All these are pretty good.

MRR: I've traveled to Mexico on numerous occasions, why is it that Guadalajara is the only scene with bands that play in the style of '80s Spanish punk. Are there others outside of Guadalajara?

Peter: We were the first in our city to start playing this style again. Then a couple kids started following our path and started similar bands, but we certainly are the spearhead of this musical style. We have not seen bands play this style in other [Mexican] states, but we have heard bands in Spain and the USA doing it.

MRR: Do you guys play or have you played in other bands?

Peter: Yeah, me and Tucho played in Basca Urbana, like in early 2003. Then Cesar also joined the band and played bass for a while.

Tucho: Rene was in a project called Refugio Anti-ley, but they never really got it going.

MRR: Tell me a little more about the scene in Guadalajara?

Peter: There are a lot of good bands and many different styles here, but we don't have the help of any organizers or labels to help set-up shows or release records.

Tucho: It doesn't help that nobody wants to pay for anything.

MRR: Is the scene in Guadalajara big and how does it differ from other states in Mexico?

Tucho: The scene here is big in the new/current styles of punk like D-beat, crust, and hardcore just like in most cities and states, but it is very small in the style of music we play.

MRR: What are your lyrics about?

Peter: We set nothing in stone. We just express how we feel in our current state of life. For example, on our song "Cerdos" (Police) is about sickness, "No Quiero Ser Viejo" (I Don't Want To Be Old): impotence, "La Peor Pesadilla" (The Worst Nightmare): desperation.

Tucho: "Rebelion" talks about rebellion, "Esclavos" (Slaves) relates to disgust, etc...

MRR: Where do you all get your influences from?

Peter: Mostly from Spanish bands from the '80s like Eskorbuto, Larsen, La Uvi, Commando 9mm, Vulpess, RIP, etc...

Tucho: Also from American and English groups from the late '70s like the Ramones, Sex Pistols, the New York Dolls, etc...

MRR: What have you guys released so far?

Tucho: We have an eight song demo, which is where the Cerdos and Cobardes 7"s came from. If you still need these, contact us, Todo Destruido, or No Options Records.

Peter: We also did a video for the song "Cobardes," directed by our friend Alvaro M.N. You can find that on YouTube, if you care to see it.

MRR: I hear you guys are really liked in Spain? Any truth to that?

Tucho: We have never been there, but we have heard they play our music on their radio shows. We have been interviewed for a couple of zines over there too, but who knows?

MRR: What are the plans for Los Monjo now?

Peter: We plan on releasing an LP. All the songs are ready, we just need to get in the studio. It should be coming out on Todo Destruido if all goes as planned.

Tucho: It's going to be called Rock Basura (Trash Rock) and will have around 10-12 song on it.

MRR: Last words?

Los Monjo: We all have the opportunity to do something and show it to the world...this is what we chose to do. We want to share it with you regardless if you like it or not. Thousands of bands start and want to change the world with their music...we don't. We don't want to change anything, and we don't want you to live your life like us. We just want to show you what music used to be...very little music and a lot of attitude. Some of you may like us, and some of you may not, but we don't care. We just want to live our lives as our songs say, "We are the plague that steps on this earth / what we step on, we contaminate / we don't want to get old, we just want to wake up the dead."

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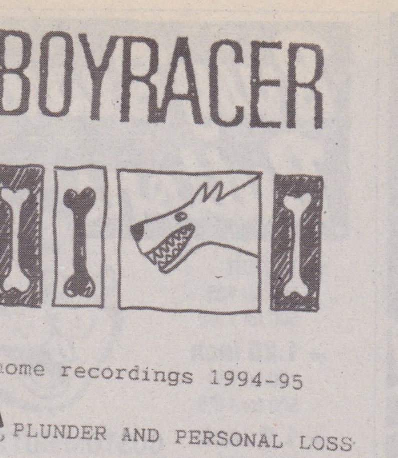


A mysterious but great Swedish hardcore record showed up at the MRR compound, by a band named Lögnhalsmottagningen. It made a lot of people's top tens and was rumored to be a creation of Stewart Boyracer, which turned out to be true. Paul Bayer, who conducted this interview emailed me and asked if we would be interested in running a Boyracer interview, since Stewart had packed it all in to live off the grid on a cattle ranch in Arizona. Boyracer in Maximum Rocknroll you say?! Well yes; they were a Lance Hahn (RIP) favorite, and were definitely spikier than any of their Sarah records compatriots. Stewart Anderson has been making fuzzed out, feedback soaked indie pop/punk music on his own terms for close to twenty years at this point.
Interview conducted by Paul Bayer.

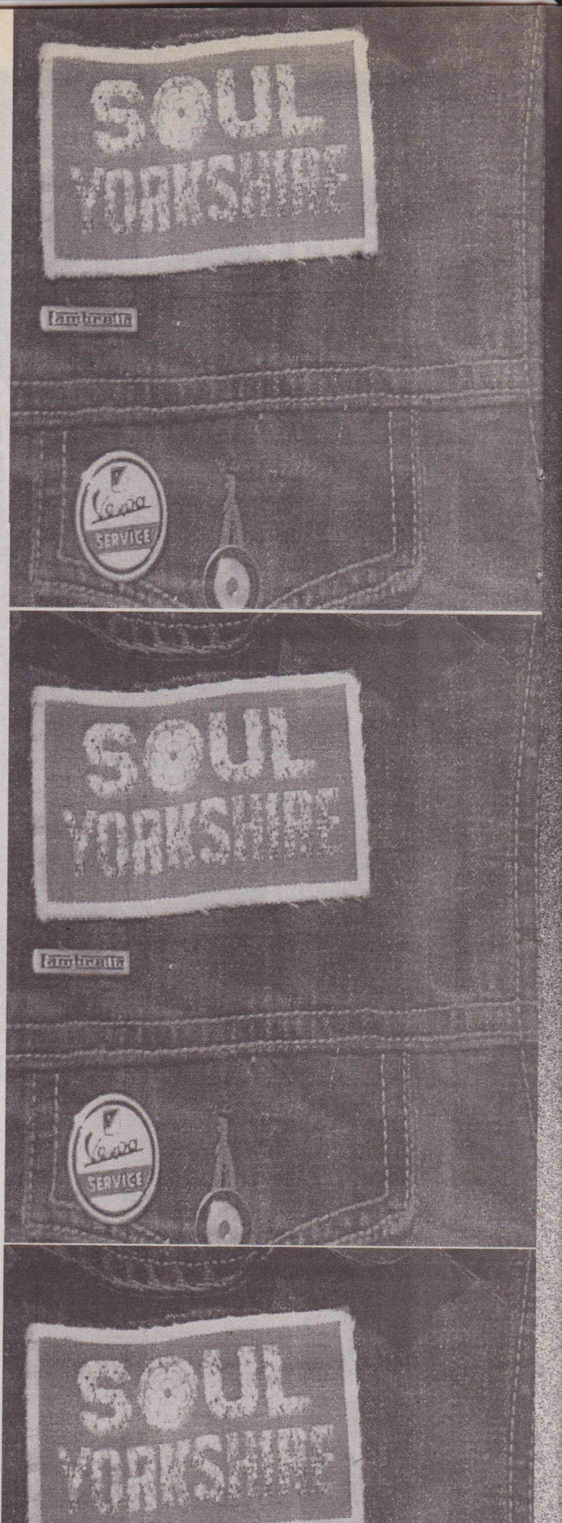
MRR: You wrote that the most recent Boyracer songs are your best ever, and that propelled this idea to leave while you are at the top. The thing most on my mind is as a band that has eighteen years of making a go at it and having 700+ songs in the bank, why give it up?

Stuart: Sadly, the most obvious response is simply money. I haven't broken even on anything I have released since 2002. Much as I love making records I now have a daughter, so it's difficult to justify. There's never been much financial reward for my toils as Boyracer, which has always been OK. The reward has been the life experience of traveling and meeting people. I truly love where I have ended up with my life. The band was only ever fuelled by own enthusiasm. At this point in time I feel I've honed my skills, and in terms of my own self-imposed limitations of what Boyracer is, I've hit my stride as a songwriter. I don't have much left to prove as Boyracer—I'm 36 years old with eleven full-length LPs, 29 singles, several world tours, a plethora of good times and great friends—it's a great place to stop and focus elsewhere. It's common sense—nothing as exciting as new found sobriety or religion, I'm still a beer-swilling atheist.

I've felt increasingly frustrated that Boyracer is remembered primarily as something we never really were. I get emails from people telling me how we are one of their favorite bands because they "love all the Sarah bands" or love lo-fi, which just galls me. Boyracer is a punk band in my mind. We never really fit in as a Sarah band. It was considered a joke to be on Sarah Records in the UK in the early '90s. Later we were lumped in with the mid-'90s lo-fi movement and I was equally uncomfortable with those comparisons. The early records we made were recorded cheaply, and consequently sound pretty bad. I was also limited with the musicians on those recordings in terms of trying to convey my ideas. I always wanted to sound like the Buzzcocks to be honest.

MRR: I'm glad you brought up Sarah Records—my questions is *what were you thinking?!* I was turned onto the band by Lance Hahn, so when I dug a little into what Sarah was about... How was it that in the midst of a tremendously noise-ridden, fuzzed-out fifteen-songs-in-twenty-minutes, doubled-over-drunk Boyracer set that you thought, "We'd fit in well with the rainbows, puppies, and kittens scene at Sarah."

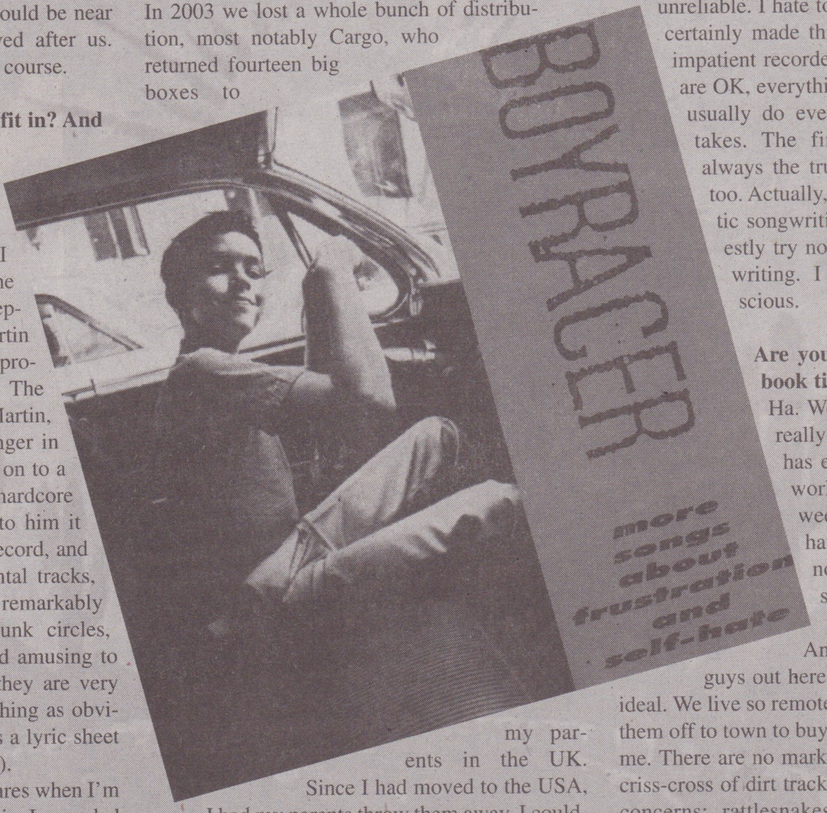
Stuart: Well, at the time I was putting on shows in Leeds. I used to put on lots of bands that passed through, including bands involved with Sarah, I usually put Boyracer on also as the opening band. So Matt and Claire, who ran Sarah Records, saw Boyracer play quite a few times. I received a letter from Claire after one of the shows I put on asking if we'd like to do a record. At the time I was living in a real shithole and didn't have a telephone or hot water. Seems incredible now. I used to write letters a lot back then; it was the honest way to connect with people—swapping cassettes etc. I was quite taken aback at their request at the time as I thought, and I still do now, that we didn't really fit in with the majority of Sarah bands. But Matt and Claire were incredibly punk in their approach to running a record label. One of the reasons they were derided so much in the UK press was that they championed the 7" format which shops hated because they couldn't make a profit, and the industry laughed at because three track 12" singles and CDEP remixes were the go. Matt also used to write a fanzine called *Are You Scared To Get Happy?*, which I read as an impressionable sixteen-year-old, and again was quite punk in it's worldly outlook. So as individuals I thought Matt and Claire were awesome. Still do. And the simple reason that we agreed to be on Sarah was the fact very few other people asked us at the time.



We knew we'd be in for a hard time—from our punky mates and the twee poppers who actually bought Sarah records. Indeed some of them wrote to Matt and Claire telling them we had ruined their record label. There was also a rumor that we slept our way on to the label. We were considered northern working class and quite gauche amongst the twee brigade. We were never that coarse to be honest, however we didn't deny the rumors as we collectively thought it was funny. One of my strongest memories of being on Sarah was playing at the Sarah 100 party, which was when they decided to stop the label after 100 releases. After our set we were at the bar and overheard someone next to us complaining they had to stand at the front and endure the hardship that was the Boyracer set, so they could be near to Harvey Williams when he played after us. They all hated us. It's funny now of course.

How does Lögnhalsmottagningen fit in? And what does it mean? Do you speak Swedish? Are the songs about farts or shitting on hookers or anti-Bush or whatever?

As for Lögnhalsmottagningen, I wrote the music on that record. The name translates loosely as "the reception of constant liars," which Martin assures me is very clever when pronounced in the Swedish tongue. The whole project came about when Martin, (drummer in the Faintest Ideas, singer in Lögnhalsmottagningen,) turned me on to a lot of amazing Swedish punk and hardcore bands. I mentioned on the phone to him it would be fun to make a hardcore record, and sent him a CD of seven instrumental tracks, which became the 7". It has been remarkably well received in some serious punk circles, which has been both rewarding and amusing to me. I didn't write the lyrics, but they are very clever and certainly not about anything as obvious as shitting on hookers. There is a lyric sheet with the record (in Swedish though).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I do like playing around with genres when I'm not Boyracering. I'm into Mod music. I recorded a couple of singles as The How, with my friend Matt Hartmann. It was our crazed two-piece take on The Who. We have very defined concepts of "good Who" and "bad Who." Basically, when Daltrey brought out the suede-fringed tops, The Who went bad. We are more into the smash-it-up-Union-Jack kinda Who. The pressing plant halted the the second How single and had to get a musicologist to confirm it wasn't a Who bootleg.

You mentioned earlier that financially the do-it-yourself aspect of punk rock can quickly become a "do yourself in" lifestyle, as pressing your own records is costly and breaking even is as rare as a unicorn most cases.

There has been a definite change in how people consume music, as you probably know. We toured in Germany in 2005 and at one of the shows some kid asked me for a track-listing of a Boyracer CD he had downloaded from somewhere. I tried to get him to buy our new CD, which we had just gotten back from the pressing plant. "Oh don't worry, I'll get it from somewhere later." Meaning he would download it. I grew up buying records, so it's still important to me to own the physical item. I can't imagine having a bunch of music on your computer. What do you do if your computer breaks? How horrid. One of my best friends runs a label called Gern Blandsten and he has basically the same story. Kid was going to buy a Little Killers record at a show where Charles was working the Gern table, and while the band played the kid's buddy said something like, "Dude, don't buy that, I'll just burn it for you."

As for DIY, I still very much believe in the ethics. We did, until recently, sell quite a lot of records. In 2003 we lost a whole bunch of distribution, most notably Cargo, who returned fourteen big boxes to my parents in the UK. Since I had moved to the USA, I had my parents throw them away. I couldn't afford to ship them over here. They are all in a landfill site North of Leeds if anyone wants to go digging.

Your current set-up in Flagstaff, AZ seems almost the furthest away you could possibly go from the typical "punk rock" lifestyle. With your current job and location, how much of an influence did John Wayne, Clint Eastwood and the outrageously hilarious *City Slickers* have on your youth in Leeds?

I never had any desire to be a cowboy until I actually ended up being one. We took over Jen's dad's ranch, after he moved to New York. So I really was thrown in the deep end. I hadn't ridden a horse before, and certainly hadn't roped or castrated bull calves before. I do all the clichéd things you imagine a cowboy would do. I've lived in cities all of my adult life and I can't imagine going back to live in a city now, especially now that I have a daughter. I love how simply we live, off the grid. Eating our own pigs and cows in the middle of nowhere. Solar power, wind generator, pumping our own water from a well.

Just me, Jen, Tallulah, our three horses, and four-hundred cows.

Is the solar powered recording studio yours?

Yes. It's actually just a Tascam digital 24-track. We have lots of fun gadgets of course— nice '60s drum kit, a set of tympani, and a few crapped out guitars. Our amps are tiny. I use a Vox ten-watt amp and a Vox five-watt amp. They use hardly any power, which of course is a consideration when using solar. We do have an Otari analog eight-track too, but it uses so much juice, and also the dusty dry environment makes it unreliable. I hate to say it, but going digital certainly made things easier. I'm such an impatient recorder—as long as the drums are OK, everything else falls into place. I usually do everything in two or three takes. The first take, regardless, is always the truest. I write on the spot too. Actually, not to belittle my fantastic songwriting achievements, I honestly try not to spend much time on writing. I believe in the subconscious.

Are you open for any band to book time to record?

Ha. Well, not really. I've never really thought about it, no one has ever actually asked me. I work six or seven days a week with the ranch and have so little free time I'm not sure I would want to spend it recording a band unless I was really into it. And also, to get a bunch of guys out here I don't really know isn't ideal. We live so remotely, it's not like I can send them off to town to buy beer if they are annoying me. There are no marked roads out here—just a criss-cross of dirt tracks. Plus there can be other concerns: rattlesnakes, wild dogs, mountain lions, scary outcasts.

For your finale record you only pressed 100 copies, why?

That's pretty much all we could sell. Plus, I didn't want unsold copies everywhere. It's nice to just have it over with. I am absolutely comfortable with the fact it is our greatest record, and I have no desire left to share it with the world. I'm happy 100 people that really wanted to hear it got to hear it. Most people that have a copy have written to me. It's a very personal experience overall, between band and friend.

What is the best way for a person to get Boyracer releases?

Everything we have left is available from our www.myspace.com/therealboyracer website. No one else has any of our recent releases. Plus if anyone does buy from us, you can be guaranteed you are rewarding us directly! And we're cheap and lovely people too of course...

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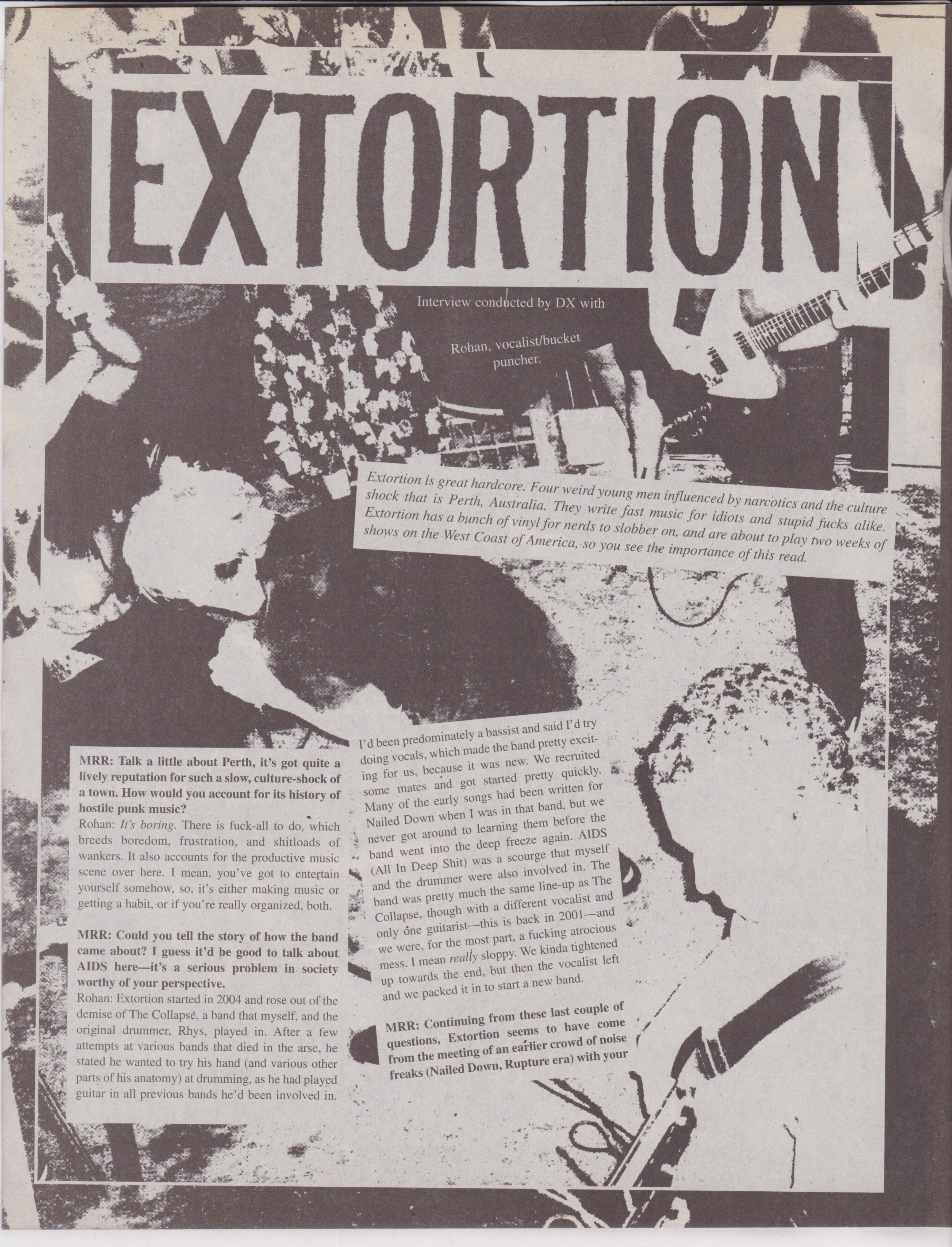

Interview conducted by DX with

Rohan, vocalist/bucket puncher.

Extortion is great hardcore. Four weird young men influenced by narcotics and the culture shock that is Perth, Australia. They write fast music for idiots and stupid fucks alike. Extortion has a bunch of vinyl for nerds to slobber on, and are about to play two weeks of shows on the West Coast of America, so you see the importance of this read.

MRR: Talk a little about Perth, it's got quite a lively reputation for such a slow, culture-shock of a town. How would you account for its history of hostile punk music?

Rohan: *It's boring*. There is fuck-all to do, which breeds boredom, frustration, and shitloads of wankers. It also accounts for the productive music scene over here. I mean, you've got to entertain yourself somehow, so, it's either making music or getting a habit, or if you're really organized, both.

MRR: Could you tell the story of how the band came about? I guess it'd be good to talk about AIDS here—it's a serious problem in society worthy of your perspective.

Rohan: Extortion started in 2004 and rose out of the demise of The Collapsé, a band that myself, and the original drummer, Rhys, played in. After a few attempts at various bands that died in the arse, he stated he wanted to try his hand (and various other parts of his anatomy) at drumming, as he had played guitar in all previous bands he'd been involved in. I'd been predominately a bassist and said I'd try doing vocals, which made the band pretty exciting for us, because it was new. We recruited some mates and got started pretty quickly. Many of the early songs had been written for Nailed Down when I was in that band, but we never got around to learning them before the band went into the deep freeze again. AIDS (All In Deep Shit) was a scourge that myself and the drummer were also involved in. The band was pretty much the same line-up as The Collapse, though with a different vocalist and only one guitarist—this is back in 2001—and we were, for the most part, a fucking atrocious mess. I mean *really* sloppy. We kinda tightened up towards the end, but then the vocalist left and we packed it in to start a new band.

MRR: Continuing from these last couple of questions, Extortion seems to have come from the meeting of an earlier crowd of noise freaks (Nailed Down, Rupture era) with your

generation of perverts (AIDS, Halo, etc. era), could you talk a little about how you perceived these bands growing up in Perth, and how they influenced Extortion?

Rohan: Yeah. After Rhys left for an extended trip to the UK, I asked Dean to play for Extortion, as I'd played in the last incarnation of Nailed Down with him in 2002 and knew he was a killer drummer (not literally, although that would be cool). He had played in quite a few fast Perth bands in the mid '90s (Rupture, Nailed Down, Heist etc.) Those bands were definitely a big influence on us, 'cause when we were getting into hardcore their records were still pretty easy to get around Perth (not so much anymore) so they were among some of the first hardcore records we heard. There was a really menacing sound to them, like you could really believe there was something seriously wrong with the people making this music.

MRR: You've toured the East Coast of Australia a couple of times, to pretty heartfelt appreciation from dreadlocked bike-punk, to sinister grind-fiend, to crucial vegan mosh crew, what do you think about Australian punk and hardcore? I feel you're isolated enough from it to have a pretty distant appreciation/condemnation.

Rohan: Haha. Our tours usually only consist of a few days due to our drummer's heavy work schedule, so I don't really know too much other than what I've seen at a handful of shows. There are a lot of good bands around nowadays. It seemed a few years ago that there were fuck-all bands and the ones that were around were pretty average (the ones I was in included).

MRR: Could you give a brief history of the modern Perth fast core cult, particularly a little information on Heist, Rupture, and Nailed Down who are probably the most well renowned bands from your city?

Rohan: I don't know too much about it. Pretty much everyone who was around back then either dropped out or OD'd. Our new drummer, Dean, played for Rupture, Heist, and Nailed Down, but claims he always hated the scene and punks in general and only played because he liked the music. From what I heard, it was a lot of junkies and not too many live shows due to a lack of venues. In fact, Heist was only a studio band for the most part, and played one or two shows later on with a different drummer. Nailed Down is pretty much just Kim and whoever he recruits to play whatever style of hardcore he wants to play at the time, from fastcore, to Swedish, to Japanese, to Oi!, and back to fast hardcore again—it's pretty varied. He's been doing it since '93 and Nailed Down isn't going right now, but I wouldn't be surprised if it started up again sometime soon. It's something I'd like to see—Kim has a very Sakevi-like attitude to playing live. Rupture is pretty gnarly, but, like Nailed Down, kinda jumped around style-wise, and I'm not much of a fan of the later stuff. They started as a pretty straightforward grind band, but soon developed their own sound, something like a mix of Mob 47 with Siege or SOB. The whole anti-PC thing that they are infamous for really began a few years after they started, after the vocalist went to Melbourne and didn't think much of the PC-punks he met. They released such a huge amount of stuff and there is still more coming out now, two or three years after Andrew Sheen (the vocalist) died of some heart-related fuck up. I wish I could give you some more info on these guys but they all moved over to Melbourne in the late '90s. I think they only played once over there, though. I heard stories from Neil Undinism who was such a big fan that he pissed at the bar rather than go to the toilet and miss a second of their show.

MRR: Extortion has some pretty dark lyrics about serial killers, slashers, etc. I understand why this works given the dark, brooding feel of the music, but I'm kinda curious about *why* you wanna write such "messed up" shit.

Rohan: Why not? It's not as if the audience cares or even figures out what the fuck I'm saying when we're playing. Regardless of this, you gotta write something. You know when you looked at clouds as a kid and you could see shapes, like a boat or something? These situations are what pop into my head when I hear the tunes, I guess. I *always* get asked this question in Extortion interviews. It's fucking annoying trying to think of new answers. Saying the same thing in interviews every time makes for boring interviews, but recently I've been thinking, "fuck it." Maybe I should keep a big database of answers to questions that are commonly asked and then just cut and paste the relevant answer. You'll probably see this answer verbatim in a stack of zines in the future.

MRR: Do you write better songs when you haven't had sex or jacked off?

Rohan: Pretty much. The more frustrated I am, the better the song will be. Well, it's either frustration or getting totally stoned. Man, most of my best song writing is done when I am completely fucking high. I can get so stoned I can't fucking function, like can't talk to another human being (it always becomes apparent to me when I'm high that what I say and do is what other people use to create an image of who I am in their head, and rather than fuck it up and make myself a weirdo or total idiot in their eyes, most of the time I choose to say nothing at all). But I feel like I can really tap into the vein and get caught up in the dynamics of speed. Weird concepts start congealing in my head, like the idea of trying to make time seem faster than it actually is. Fuck, talking about this really makes me want to punch a bucket through, right now. I kind of digressed heinously there, but getting back to the original question, I would like to meet someone who can write a decent song after jacking off. I mean, after a tug of war with Cyclops there isn't much you could possibly want to do but sit back a relax, right? Maybe if you were writing some seriously mellow shit that could work for you, but even then I don't think so.

MRR: OK, you're about to tour the US... It's your first oversees tour with a punk band. What are you expecting here?

Rohan: Well, it's going to be a pretty short tour for one thing. Just over two weeks long and only on the west coast, so I'm hoping it's not going to be too tense. Our drummer, Rhys did a real long tour of the US with his old band Frightener, and said it was kind of a bummer—too much travel and not enough time to see anything. We'd kind of like to do some sightseeing and shit too. So, it's going to be a fairly relaxed tour. The kind of tour you go on after jacking off I guess. Also, we'll be touring with our mates from Iron Lung, which will be sick and I hope we get to see some bands I've listened to a shitload, but never seen due to living in the middle of nowhere.

MRR: Why do a band interview? Is there anything you want to talk about regarding Extortion that usually gets bypassed because people wanna drool on your ability to write fast punk music?

Rohan: Why? Because you look like a cunt if you deny people's request to do so. It may be the case that I am a cunt, but I don't want to appear to be one. I've done a billion (give or take a few) interviews for small zines, many of which don't even make it to hard copy, so I think if you put all of them together and cut the *squillion* times I've been asked what our influences are and if we're ever going to tour such-and-such, you'd probably have an interview that covers everything. There's probably something I haven't been asked that we probably should have, but I'm far too unimaginative to know what it could possibly be. Maybe something along those lines: "Why are you so unimaginative? Why do you just rip all your ideas from other bands? Why aren't you more original? Why are you such a jerk? Where's that ten bucks you owe me?" etc.

January US tour dates (all shows with Iron Lung):
Fri 16 – LA or San Diego
Sat 17 – LA or San Diego
Sun 18 – LA or San Diego
Mon 19 – Bakersfeild
Tue 20 – Flagstaff
Wed 21 – Pheonix @ The Phix
Thu 22 – Ventura, CA @ The Lab
Fri 23 – San Francisco @ Annie's Social Club
Sat 24 – Berkeley @ Gilman
Sun 25 – San Francisco – matinee @ Dionne's house
Mon 26 / Tue 27 – recording
Wed 28 – Portland
Thu 29 – Seattle
Fri 30 – Portland
Sat 31 – Olympia @ Old School Pizza
Sun Feb 1 – Vancouver

EXTORTION

DEATHCAGE

Deathcage is a band of veterans that have played in many raging bands over the years. Deathcage is their newest formation and has been greatly influenced by traditional Japcore bands, Discharge and of course Motörhead. Spider, the bands vocalist and artist was kind of nice to answer a few questions inquiring minds wanted to know. Read on.
interview by Timmyfuck.

MRR: So before we start can you introduce the band, your role in the band and how the band came together?
Spider, throat. I joined the band last year in October. The guys were already jamming and looking for a singer. My old band, Smash 'n' Grab, had recently died in the arse and I was toying with the idiocy of starting a new band along similar lines to Deathcage, so the transition was practically seamless. Danny and Kas hooked up at a show and then Kas's bro Ari came along. Then all of a sudden some flamboyant Swedish tourist was popping up at gigs. Nick was keen to start playing so we grabbed him as well.

MRR: Deathcage has a rich history of prior bands. Can we maybe run through a few of these? Many folks on this side of the world will be familiar with these bands.
Yeah, its quite an incestuous scene here. We've all been in bands with each other before, so we know each other well.
Kas AVC., Bleeding Face, Regular Boy's Haircut, Maniac
Ari – Bleeding Face, Maniac
Nick – Sabotuer (in Sweden)
Danny – Red Stain, Sewer Cider, Farce
Spider – Sewer Cider, Farce, Smash 'n' Grab

MRR: Do any members play in other bands at this time?
No time, man – no time.

MRR: So you mentioned that nobody has time for another band, and I can appreciate that. But it seems you have been contributing a lot to the scene via gig posters and cover art. I've seen plenty of your art circulating around. Do you want to talk about that?
I've been drawing since I was a tiny kid. I was never really into drawing people and landscapes because they had to look right, have correct proportions and such. I really liked drawing monsters. I've been doing a lot of punk stuff, mostly for the last three years. I spend a lot of time on this stuff, usually get up at 5 am and do a couple of hours each day before I have to leave. At the moment I'm trying to get a bit more into realism and color. Some obvious influences are Pushead, Mid, Sugi, and Nick Blinko, but I'm really into my mates' stuff at the moment—Murdoch. Apart from spending my social life locked in a room drawing I also study graphic design during the week and tattoo people on the weekends at a custom studio called Diablo Art. I did my first Black Flag tat the other day. First of many…hahah.

MRR: Was there any specific idea behind Deathcage as a band. Do you have any goals?
We basically wanted to create the sound that we are obsessed with. Being couped up in a darkened room spinning Judgement records became a stagnant sensation. It was time to start a band. The idea was to emulate a Japcore sound without coming off as too comical or like a piss-take, and give it our own Aussie flavor. A definite goal would be touring Japan. Three of us went over there last January and loved it. We met a lot of cool people, saw some rad shows, and spent all our money on records.

MRR: Listening to the band and trying to pinpoint influences or sounds has me bouncing direct to late-'80s Japan. I hear lots of classic Japcore, definitely some Red Stain. Can you tell us what has influenced the band?
Everyone has quite a different musical background. I would say the general influences we all have in common are Deathside, Judgement, Crude, and Lip Cream. But as individuals, Nick would say Totalitär, to pay homage to his motherland. Ari, probably LA Guns and Mötley Crüe. Danny would get his hot solo inspiration from Yngwie Malmsteen. As for me and Kas, we are on a strict Japcore diet.

MRR: If the band was stranded in the Aussie Outback and could only limit their collective record collection to ten records between the band. What records would they be?
We would not only need the following records, but also some shotguns to keep the bunyips and Ivan Milat off our backs. Oh, and I vote we eat

Nick first: Deathside *Wasted Dream* LP, Crude *Attitude* LP, Totalitär/Disclose split LP, Judgement *Process* 7", Kuro *Who the Helpless* 8", Motörhead Discog LP, Discharge *Hear Nothing See Nothing, Say Nothing* LP, Lip Cream *Nine Shocks Terror* LP, GISM *Detestation* LP, reserved for some glam guitar metal for Danny and Ari…

MRR: If we can maybe digress from the music a bit, what other influences have shaped you as individuals and as a band? How were all of you introduced to this wonderful HC punk reality?
I was first introduced to punk when I was in high school, back then I would rock a lot of Crass and Conflict. I got heavily into a vegan lifestyle and was hellbent on going to every punk show around. When I turned seventeen I moved to San Francisco, and finished school. I was blown away by Gilman Street, a place I would go every fucking weekend. Punk has opened my eyes to a lot of things going on in the world, and I've come to realize that if I didn't get into it I'd be doing the same thing my school chums are doing now: time and heroin.

MRR: Let's keep on the power of influences. What influences your lyrics?
I like to have an ongoing theme on each release—the classic concept record, if you will. For example *From Despair To Where* songs all dealt with imprisonment and isolation. Not only state run jails, but also the prisons people build around themselves by becoming enslaved by drugs. Racial discrimination is another way people isolate themselves by not accepting others. Having said that, I do like to keep the lyrics kind of abstract and obtuse, so they leave the listener with some sort of open interpretation.

MRR: Do you have a favorite Deathcage song from a lyrical perspective?
I'd have to say "Shallow Grave." It's about slaughtering Nazi skinheads and dumping the bodies in a shallow ditch. The lyrics just flow well. Or of course "Chaos Night Rider!" The second 7", which is coming out soon, is more of a study of the human condition and our obsession with power and greed.

MRR: So the band has recorded a 7" on Endless Blockade. Was this the first trip to the studio? Can you tell us about the 7" and any other recordings there may be like comp tracks, demos.
From Despair To Where follows a general theme of imprisonment and isolation, which got carried through to the artwork as well. I did all the illustrations and Nick did the design of the package. It has been really well received and I'm pretty sure there's hardly any left. If you missed out try emailing Endless Blockades, I think they may have a few stashed away. There was no studio—Danny recorded it at the plague-ridden cave we jam in. Now that place really is Deathcage personified. It's basically a small room under Kas' house full of rubbish and disease-ridden vermin.

MRR: Has the band had the opportunity to tour around Australia?
So far we've toured Melbourne to play the last Pisschrist show and we went up to Brizzy for the 7" launch. Later this year we're touring with the other Sydney Daggers bands to Melbourne. There will be blood.

MRR: Okay if somebody asked you about the best story ever, your one all-time favorite memory of the band thus far what would it be?
I thought Queensland was pretty nuts. People in Brisbane seem less inhibited than punks in Sydney and Melbourne and let loose a little more. Especially the AA show we did. Me and Danny both got knocked on our arses. Oh, and these crazy punks tried to bring in a steel cage for me to be held captive in while we played. It didn't fit in the venue door so was just dumped it in some poor bugger's yard. Speaking of weirdos, someone even made Deathcage cupcakes. But any shows when the Daggers are around make for a loose night.

MRR: Looking back at your life within the HC scene, has punk changed your outlook on life?
Becoming a vegan when I was a kid and getting into anarchism made me change the way I thought, for sure. I used to volunteer at Bound Together on Haight Street and I met all sorts of interesting people. I think if I didn't get into punk I would either be in prison with my high-school mates or just working a shit job, voting, paying tax, and watching the telly 'til death.

MRR: Do you think punk has had any effect on larger society?
Yeah of course, not so much these days, but take a look at bands like Crass. They were doing some revolutionary things and really pushing boundaries. It's a shame now that something like a mohawk is quite an acceptable and safe symbol in society. Years ago in Australia you'd get bashed if you had one.

MRR: OK enough philosophising…. Can you tell us about any future plans for the band?
A tour of Japan is the goal, money is an issue for some of us, but hopefully we can make it there soon. We have a new 7" coming up on Schizophrenic Records, which I'm really excited about. Right now we're just working on our LP and playing as many shows as we can. I would like to tour the USA, but I have a bit of a chequered past, so who knows if I would get let in or not.

How can folks get copies of the records or contact the band?
Through the MySpace or my email: Deathcage@dslstraps.com.au.
Can I plug my site? www.spiderdeath.com. OK, cheers for the interview.

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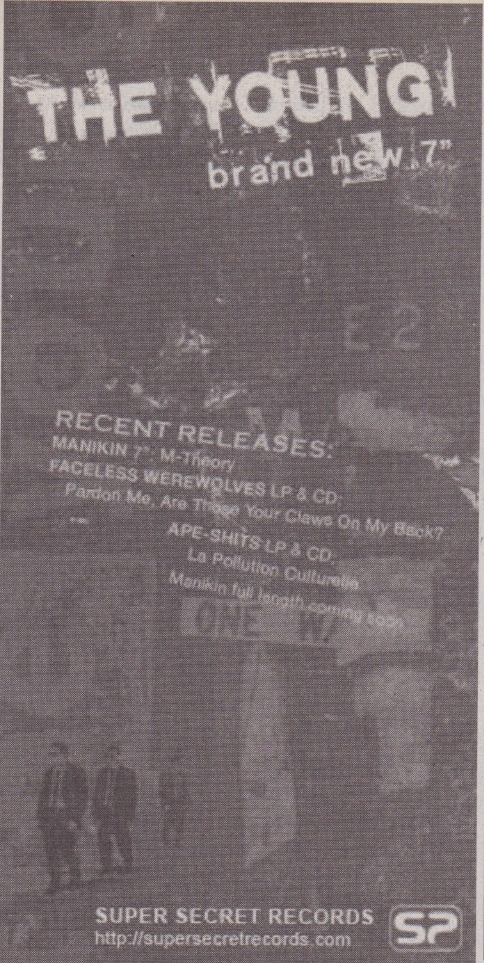

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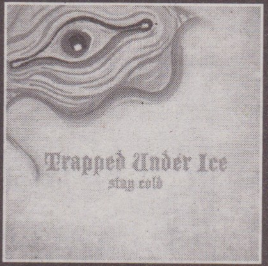
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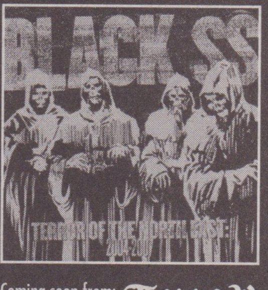
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THINK FAST

Think Fast is a young, energetic, hardcore band from Phoenix, Arizona that, after four years, four records, and two tours, is just beginning to make a mark on US hardcore. Their music is a whirlwind of hyper-speed hardcore, taking the best of old and new bands to dish out some solid angry hardcore, with enough personality to keep it interesting. I was lucky enough to get the chance to sit down with them and ask them some questions.

Interview by Erik Meyer.

MRR: Who are you and what do you do?

Jon: I am Jon and I play drums.

Garrett: My name is Garrett, I play guitar.

Gerson: I'm Gerson and I play bass

Andy: I'm Andy. I write words and yell them.

MRR: What would you say influences Think Fast musically or otherwise?

Jon: There are a lot of bands that I listen to and think, "shit they are really good," so in a way they would influence me. But I guess my biggest influence is life. It's the main reason we are all playing this music in the first place. Whether it is the shit that happens in my personal life, in my city, in this country, or around the world, all those factors fuel my hatred and give me a reason to have this as an outlet.

Garrett: Personally, my influences have changed a lot since we started. When we first started I was 13 years old and just getting into hardcore. I just wanted us to sound like an '80s hardcore band. Almost five years later I think my influences musically are somewhere between Talk Is Poison, Failure Face, Deathreat, and Infest. Maybe some Italian hardcore such as Wretched and Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers just in terms of ugliness. Growing up and living in the giant, hot, smelly, and constantly expanding suburb of Phoenix, Arizona, is also a big influence. Also, local Phoenix hardcore legends Unruh are a big influence.

Gerson: Musically, old hardcore bands like Seven Seconds and Jerry's Kids, mixed with newer, more aggressive punk like Lärm, Deathreat, Tear It Up, Infest, etc. The overall feeling of hopelessness, despair, and being fucking pissed influence me as well.

Andy: I'm into a lot of different stuff, but not all of it specifically influences me for this band. '80s US hardcore has been my favorite style since I was 15 and I've always loved the way that kind of stuff condenses all this energy and anger into a minute-long, three-chord song. Now besides our first 7", I don't think we in any way sound like an '80s USHC band, but I think we still try to make music and have lyrics that have that same kind of feel to them.

MRR: Your sound seems kind of hard to pinpoint...

Garrett: I suppose. I mean, I guess I would just consider us a fast hardcore band. But I don't care too much about trying to mold this band to fit into a certain hardcore subgenre or clique. That has always ended up just bumming me out in the end. I don't think we are groundbreaking by any means, but we all have very different influences and are all very different people and our music definitely sounds like a reflection of us. One thing I like with this band is we can play to almost any crowd, with a generally good response. The shows we played on the last tour were generally pretty diverse. But all I really want to do is write angry, aggressive music. That is my biggest goal with this band, to write the most aggressive music that I possibly can.

Andy: It's not really that hard to pinpoint; it's really just angry hardcore punk. To say we are anything else would be ridiculous.

Jon: Yeah, it's easy enough to me. It's hardcore or punk. We are not original or groundbreaking by any means—just pissed.

MRR: You guys usually play a short set with the only song explanations being a brief sentence any particular reason for this?

Jon: I get really uncomfortable if we play for too long. It's easy to ignore people staring at you, but only for a little while. I hate the feeling of waiting for a band to finish their set, especially my own band.

Garrett: I think with a lot of fast bands the energy level starts to go down after about eight or nine minutes. Playing quickly is pretty important for us. I think it is totally cool when bands explain what the fuck they are screaming about, as long as it isn't totally self-righteous, phony, cookie cutter bullshit.

Gerson: Everything that needs to be said regarding our songs and band has been said before. If you want to listen to a lecture, go to ASU.

Andy: That's the way I like to see hardcore done, so that's the way I do it. Get up there, make your point, and get the fuck out. It's condensed rage.

MRR: So would you say Think Fast is a political band?

Andy: This may conflict with some of the other member's opinions, but the way I see it, I mean being the one who writes all the lyrics, we are not. I like to write about what's completely real to me and what I see happening right in front of me. One of our songs is about seeing the mobile-home park I grew up in leveled to the ground to build new apartment buildings. That's the only kind of stuff I know how to write about—things I personally witness or feel that enrage or depress me. I mean there are a lot of horrible things that go on out there in the world, but they are a lot bigger than me and I would just rather write about things I in some way witness.

Garrett: I think it depends. I would say that working on a DIY and independent level, booking tours, putting out records, *blah blah blah*, is political in a sense. I don't think there is anything wrong with a band being political. I think there are a lot of important things that really need to be addressed, one way being through music. But it just seems that more often than not these bands' politics are based off nothing more than trite slogans, which have lost any sort of real relevance. A lot of *political bands* seem to hype their beliefs, making themselves look far more radical or extreme by their politics than they really are. I don't buy it and I think from the standpoint of a band, which many people are going to open up their ears and listen to, that can be very irresponsible. But like Andy said, our songs are about our lives and what we know. I suppose you can put political connotations on some of our songs, but you can do that with almost anything. Everything you do has political connotations, it just depends on if the individual chooses to address those connotations.

Jon: I agree.

Gerson: We're definitely not a party-good-times, apathetic punk band trying to piss people off. We're also not a lecturing, self-righteous turd band either. We write and talk about what's important to us.

MRR: So, Think Fast doesn't necessarily have a specific message you are trying to convey?

Garrett: I don't think so. I don't want to be in a band where we tell people how things are, or even how things should be. I want to tell people more how we see the world through our eyes and in relation to our lives. One thing that bothers me is that a lot of people involved in punk or hardcore seem to be under the impression that by being part of this subculture they have somehow reached a higher level, and they have realized something that other people simply can't grasp. Like some sort of knowledge that the unfortunate rest of the population doesn't understand. That is all fucking bullshit. Everyone involved in hardcore is just as confused as anyone else on this planet. We are all totally fucking clueless and just trying to figure shit out in this big, confusing world.

Jon: Nothing that offers any solutions for anything. I guess Andy has the advantage of words while we beat the shit out of our instruments.

Andy: I look at it more like, I'm writing about real personal things and maybe somebody out there hears it and goes, "Yeah I feel the same way." If that's considered a message, then I guess so. I don't think I personally have any place telling everybody what's up, and suggesting I'm the one that has a plan to fix everything. I like to be in touch with the fact that I'm just some dork screaming my head off, who just goes home later and does boring normal things, like listen to records and eat ramen noodles.

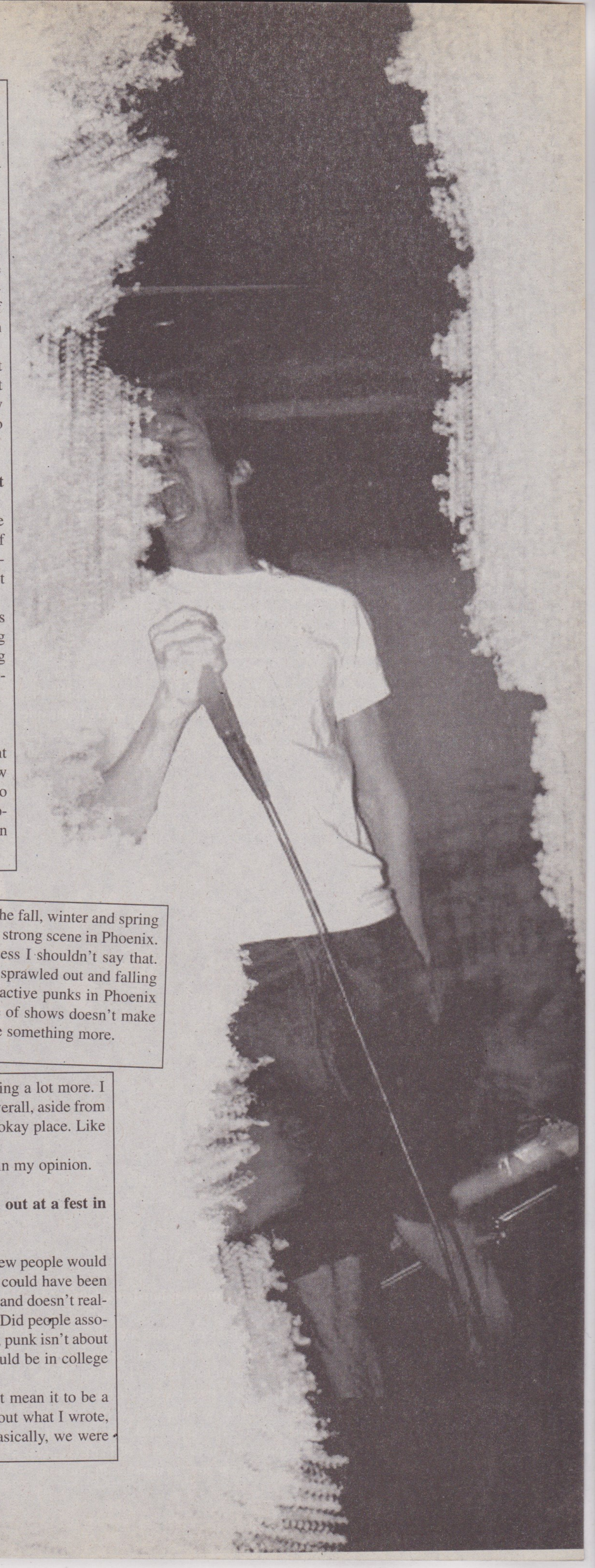
MRR: You guys have X'ed fists on the label on your first 7". Is Think Fast a straight edge band?

Garrett: The label of the 7" was two x'ed fists because we were sitting in my room trying to think of what to put on it. We got sick of trying to think of something, so we put just put that on because it's silly. I have been back and forth with calling myself straight edge since I got into punk. I have never been into drinking or drugs. I don't like how it feels. Some of my best friends do that stuff and I could care less if people do. Alcohol tastes bad

and weed makes me cough. As far as labeling myself straight edge, I could really care less about it.
Andy: I am definitely not straight edge. I drank two glasses of wine approximately three months ago. But besides that and smoking pot a couple times when I was eleven, as well as prescriptions I've had, I've never used any kind of drugs. I think generally life is just better without that kind of stuff. That's all I have to say on that matter.
Jon: The term straight edge has definitely changed its meaning for me from when I started to call myself straight edge and many years later after meeting all types of fellow edgers. Some of them are really rad people, some of them are total dickheads. That being said, I don't want to associate myself with total dickheads, although I am kind of a dickhead. And the guys in my band are kind of dickheads. Okay, yeah. I'm straight edge. And we got the idea for the fists from the Teen Idles 7". We didn't do a very good job at recreating it.
Gerson: Maybe 20 years ago straight edge was a commendable movement, but in this day and age of Davey Havok, AFI, mall straight edge, where straight edge is something you post on your fucking MySpace instead of an actual way of living—what's the fucking point? I am drug and alcohol free, but I feel no need to claim edge.

MRR: For those of us who haven't been to Phoenix, tell us a little bit about The Chamber. What is it like running an illegal punk venue in Phoenix?
Jon: We have been real fortunate to have The Chamber around for as long as we have. Gerson does pretty much all the booking/care taking of the place. A lot of people chip in for rent and otherwise. I can't even count the shows that wouldn't have happened if we didn't have The Chamber. We take a minimal amount and sometimes nothing to make sure the bands that play get money.
Gerson: It's a very rewarding thing to have in all our lives. A variety of bands have played there in the last 15 months. I can tell you that none of us are going through that whole "I'm jaded, old, fuck the kids" bullshit. We've been having problems with cops lately, but there's always a solution to these kinds of problems.

MRR: What is it like to be a punk in Arizona?
Garrett: Phoenix and its surrounding cities aren't very punk. Phoenix is a giant suburb. There is a fair amount of college bros who love to harass you and throw things at you out of their lifted rides. Just yesterday I almost go beat up by two different people within about ten minutes for wearing "faggot shorts." But I suppose that is pretty common everywhere. I don't think being punk anywhere in America is all that strange these days though.



Gerson: Arizona can be hot and wretched during the summer, but in the fall, winter and spring it's gorgeous. As far as punk goes, it's not social, but we have a pretty strong scene in Phoenix.
Jon: Being a punk in Arizona is just like anywhere else. Well, I guess I shouldn't say that. There are other cities that are definitely more punk. Phoenix itself is sprawled out and falling apart. This sounds way punk, but the fact that there aren't as many active punks in Phoenix make it not punk. Having a dirty, smelly house and drinking outside of shows doesn't make you punk. Maybe when the punks in this town realize that we will be something more.

Andy: I think being a weirdo here as apposed to a more liberal place, is saying a lot more. I mean central Arizona is not necessarily a punk Disneyland to say the least. Overall, aside from the unbearable three months of summer weather here, I think Phoenix is an okay place. Like Gerson said, the winter is great.
Garrett: I still think the winters are disappointing. We have terrible weather in my opinion.

MRR: Tell us a little about the controversial pamphlet you guys passed out at a fest in Phoenix?
Andy: Direct this at Garrett. It was his thing, not a Think Fast thing.
Jon: Garrett made a pamphlet and wanted to pass it out at a place where he knew people would disagree. Punk is about sharing ideas. If his ideas were in our songs, people could have been enjoying it and not even known what we are talking about. But because our band doesn't really touch on those issues, Garrett wanted people to know exactly how he felt. Did people associate his pamphlet with our band? Sure. I am definitely okay with that. To me, punk isn't about making friends. If I wanted to join a subculture that makes me friends I would be in college trying to join a fraternity.
Garrett: First off, like Andy said, it was only me who passed it out. I didn't mean it to be a thing that got stuck with the band. Not all of us even totally agree 100% about what I wrote, but of course it ended up being tagged as a Think Fast thing. Whatever. Basically, we were

asked by a few of our friends to play a big hardcore fest in Phoenix. We didn't really fit in with any of the other bands playing, and most of the crowd was way into Revelation, Bridge Nine, and Deathwish Inc, type bands. I decided to write a pamphlet to pass out at the show with some things that have been on my mind, although a good part of me wanting to pass it out was to stir up some shit and cause people to have to step out of their comfortable little bubbles that they surround themselves in. I had some ill feeling towards certain bands on that show and I wrote some things regarding their record labels as well as other popular bands on those labels, which I felt had questionable business practices. I also wrote about violent dancing, among other things, which I think can be a pretty big deal when people are uncomfortable in that sort of scenario. I passed my little pamphlet out shortly before we played. People started getting really weird all of a sudden and there was a really weird vibe. It really just ended up with a bunch of Arizona hardcore celebrities screaming in my face. I was told to "Get the fuck out of hardcore," and there was also talk from certain people about "kicking my ass." It was cool though to have a handful of people tell me that they agreed with what I was saying, or that they had never really thought about any of these things until reading what I wrote. A lot of people just had that attitude of "No one wants to hear you whine, this is hardcore, so deal with it," which is just as bad as the whole "love it or leave it" patriotic bullshit. A few of the bands I wrote about, like This Is Hell and Outbreak ended up finding out about it and were pretty upset. I just thought their guarantees, package tours, synchronized jumps, and 30 different sweatshirt designs were pretty lame and cheesy. We ended up getting in some arguments over the internet but from my standpoint they never really justified the issues I brought up. The singer of This Is Hell insisted on discussing it via email, but eventually just stopped replying and never really answered any of the questions I asked him. I honestly don't really give a shit what these bands do, but I still think it is important to bring up this kind of shit. I think Bridge Nine and Deathwish are really lame labels, that don't release legitimate hardcore bands and just fuel a corny sect, which is comprised of nothing but a bunch of lame, pseudo-pissed-off white boys, jumping around looking cool for their girlfriends that they make stand to the side and take pictures of them getting angry in the pile on during Trash Talk. Ceremony is fucking cheesy and Outbreak has way too many shirt designs. I think it's really important to complain, whine, and call people out on their shit.

MRR: What do you think makes the DIY aspect of hardcore better? Is this where Think Fast fits in?

Garrett: Nothing. There are just as many problems with DIY hardcore—a big thing being people using the tag of DIY as an excuse for laziness. Also there's the over-saturation of the scene by total turd bands. I am equally as critical of both sides of the spectrum and they both have their fair share of bullshit. And as a band I don't think we fit in on either side. I have a hard time relating to like half the people involved in DIY hardcore. But I just think that when bands try to reach some sort of next level of hardcore, or break into the mainstream music industry, there are far more contradictions and problems to still maintain being a hardcore band. A lot of people don't really have any problem with that though. I have a friend, that was told by a member of a fairly popular Phoenix hardcore band, that his band needs to make a press kit and start sending it out to big labels, and that way they can break into the market. That's just so backwards it's unbelievable. I don't know, to me it just seems like pretty simple shit. I just realized that a lot of these people for the most part aren't into the same thing that I am, and I mean some of these people are my friends, good friends. I still can't relate to that mindset. Maybe I am just being far too idealistic. I think it is a big problem that people don't want to even consider questioning these bands' sincerity or accountability. It used to be hard to believe that people were just eating these bands up. It doesn't bother me as much anymore. If people can find some kind of value in these bands than that's great, but to me it just seems like total bullshit. I may as well just keep on enjoying what I am doing. Think Fast fits in nowhere.

Jon: I think at one point DIY meant a lot more than it does today. There are people waving the DIY flag, but are lazy as fuck and bands seem to feel that they have achieved "rock star" status. It's unfortunate but true. For these reasons I would say calling yourself DIY doesn't make you or your band automatically better than others. But working your ass off and empowering yourself does, for sure

Andy: I'm not really concerned about us fitting in anywhere. We play angry music because we feel that way and if anyone appreciates it then that's great.

MRR: You guys have a bit of a reputation in Phoenix as being *elitist* or, "DIY Nazis." Tell us a little about this.

Jon: I think this comes from us shit-talking about almost everyone and everything. Half the time we are joking, half the time we are serious. For the most part the four of us share the same sense of humor that only us and a few of our friends understand. Everyone else tends to think we are assholes, which I am perfectly fine with. Because we kind of are.

Andy: If helping run one of the few DIY show spaces in Phoenix makes us "DIY Nazis," then we are. If saying what we think and not pretending to be everyone's buddy makes us elitist, than I suppose we are. I think the four of us are generally pretty easy going and always give anybody that talks to us at shows the time of day.

Gerson: Some people are just big fucking babies. I'm sorry if it upsets you that I have a fucking opinion about punk and hardcore.

Garrett: A lot of this revolved around Gerson and me. We have our opinions and I know that personally I don't have a problem bringing up things I think are bullshit. This somehow gave people the idea that we are trying to be exclusive or elitist. What it came down to is people making assumptions with out actually talking to any of us. A lot of the people who were up in arms about this at one point I have now become friends with. I think people are over it for the most part. Also, I found the term "DIY Nazi" more of a compliment than an insult. And like Jon said, we do talk shit about almost everyone and everything. Sometimes we even get in fights with each other over it. We aren't the most positive people, but I think for the most part we are four really nice guys. A lot of the shit we say or do gets blown out of proportion and people form silly grudges.

MRR: What about Think Fast Records?
Andy: What about them?
Garrett: We have had a few instances over the internet with people mistaking us for the label. I don't care about that label. They don't release any music that even slightly interests me.
Gerson: They said if we get a couple more tattoos, including some shin pieces, they would release our next record.
Jon: They have a good name.

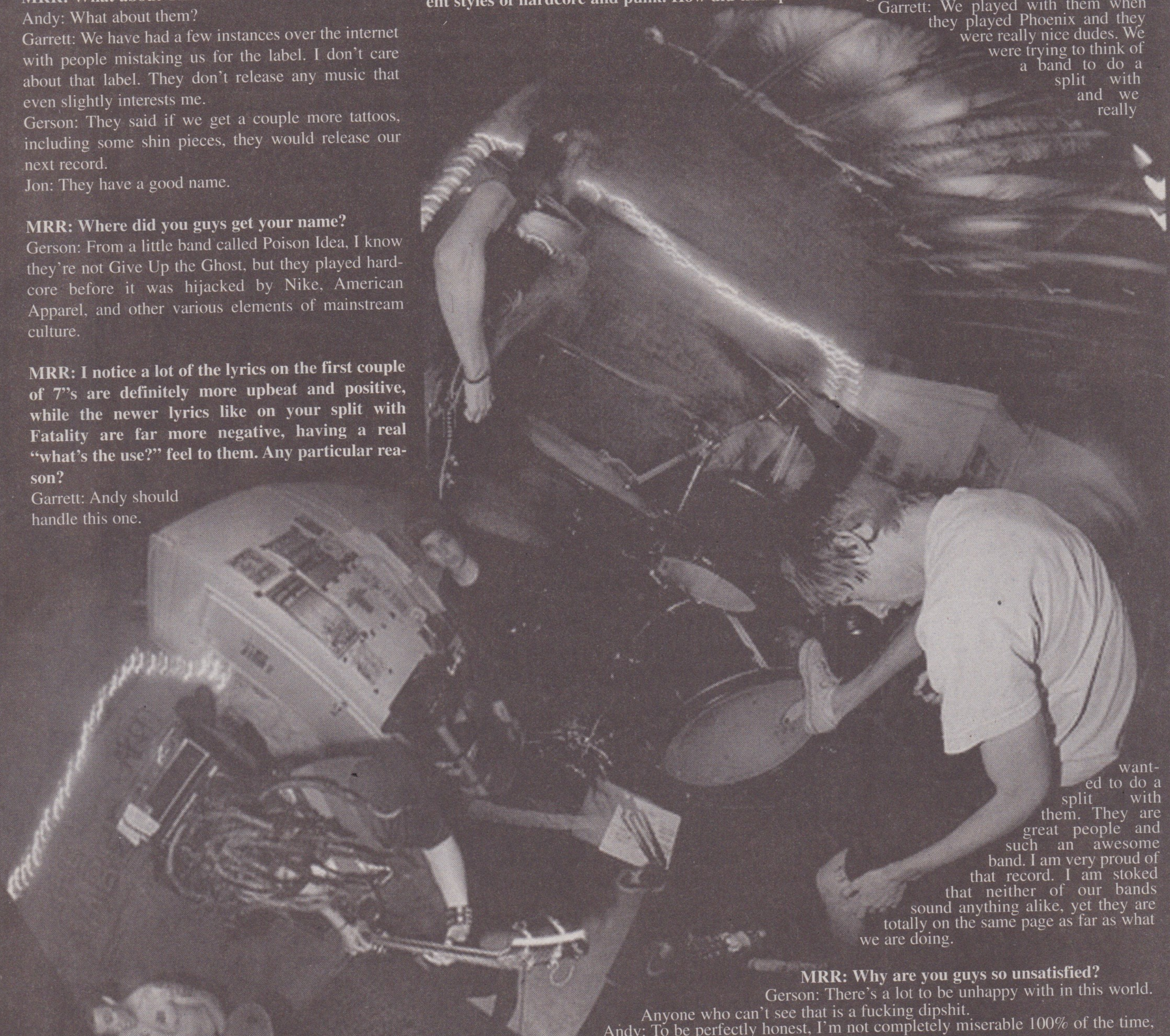
MRR: Where did you guys get your name?
Gerson: From a little band called Poison Idea, I know they're not Give Up the Ghost, but they played hardcore before it was hijacked by Nike, American Apparel, and other various elements of mainstream culture.

MRR: I notice a lot of the lyrics on the first couple of 7"s are definitely more upbeat and positive, while the newer lyrics like on your split with Fatality are far more negative, having a real "what's the use?" feel to them. Any particular reason?
Garrett: Andy should handle this one.
Andy: I write lyrics about how I feel at the time. I think that's the most natural way to do it. When our first 7" came out, I was still an angry guy, but I had more of a "let's work our way through this" attitude.

Later on, I realized I didn't feel this way anymore, so I changed my approach to lyric writing. It's that simple. I don't feel any need to only write a certain kind of lyrics that fit a certain kind of punk. I mean that's what hardcore is about anyway, right? Saying what's on your mind?

Gerson: Not all the lyrics for the first EP were upbeat and positive. We've all grown up in different ways since then, and realized how ugly and wretched life can be, so maybe that influences the lyrics?

MRR: Speaking of the split with Fatality from Reno, it is a good representation of mixing different styles of hardcore and punk. How did this split come together?
Garrett: We played with them when they played Phoenix and they were really nice dudes. We were trying to think of a band to do a split with and we really wanted to do a split with them. They are great people and such an awesome band. I am very proud of that record. I am stoked that neither of our bands sound anything alike, yet they are totally on the same page as far as what we are doing.



MRR: Why are you guys so unsatisfied?
Gerson: There's a lot to be unhappy with in this world. Anyone who can't see that is a fucking dipshit.
Andy: To be perfectly honest, I'm not completely miserable 100% of the time, and to pretend I am would just be ridiculous. But I am definitely the kind of person that finds what is wrong with something before I find what's right. I also constantly feel like I'm getting the short end of the stick. I obsess about how I think everybody has it better then me. I think these things are apparent in my lyrics.
Garrett: It is hard to feel satisfied. We live in a world that is pretty much based around making people feel like shit. We are raised from day one to not feel satisfied with our lives.

MRR: Any closing comments?
Garrett: Dropping our of college was the best idea I have ever had.
Andy: Life is so easy when you're told what to do, where to work, and how to live.

GODS OWN WORDS

THE story OF NULL and VOID

by lance hahn

Andy Barker AKA Andy Stratton was always interested in music. Andy, Null and Void vocalist and guitarist, "Before punk I listened to the records my parents had such as The Beatles, Sam Cooke, Arthur Brown, John Lennon, and The Stones. I also listened to Led Zeppelin and Bob Dylan. Lennons' *Shaved Fish* album was the one that I really liked, I thought the words, melodies and harmonies were really strong. In the mid '70s there was the whole glam rock thing, bands like the Sweet and *wot-not*, I sort of liked them too. So dressing up like a punk was probably quite normal compared with that lot…an easy step you might say, not that I was ever dressing up like David Bowie."

"Anyway when punk started I was 14. When you're 14 and you see a Stranglers video on TV doing 'Go Buddy Go' or 'No More Heroes' you think 'hold on a minute, what's happening here?', it really was so totally different to anything else. About the same time my uncle gave me an acoustic guitar and I learnt some chords from a teach yourself book. The next thing I'm trying to learn the chords to 'Holidays In The Sun' and 'Pretty Vacant.' I started writing songs straight away, but they weren't about going over the Berlin wall, it didn't mean anything to me. Once I was playing the guitar I soon met other people who were into punk and that led to me getting involved with a band. I was the guitarist and the band was called Devices. The drummer was Adie Thomkins (later of Null and Void) and the bass player was Kelvin Sealy. The singer was a girl but I'm sorry I can't remember her name. Kelvin had a car and was the organizational force behind it. We rehearsed quite a bit and we had a couple of gigs in village halls. I remember waiting up all night one time at the Stonehenge free festival to do a gig on one of the stages.”

“Mark Hedge was a friend at school, and we started hanging out together after punk started. Mark was pals with Curtis Youe because they lived very close to each other and had grown up together. So we used to get trashed together in the village or go to Yeovil and hang around making the place look untidy. We used to listen to the Clash, the Damned and stuff like that.”

Previous to the band Null and Void, he had been hometown friends with the Mob. Through that friendship, he put out a single under his own name on the Mob's label, All The Madmen.”

Andy. “I had been playing the guitar in a band called Devices, so when that finished I continued doing some music on my own. I was writing songs but I wasn't recording anything so there are no early demos of Andy Stratton. I only worked with Graham the once and that was for the recording of the record. I wrote the song after I returned from the Stonehenge free festival one year. The Mob were going to release *Witch Hunt*, so I sort of tagged along and did my single at the same time. Releasing it on All The Madmen seemed like the natural thing to do because these were the people I used to hang around with. All The Mad Men wasn't a proper record company, not at the beginning, so there was no A&R man saying ‘Hey Andy, we gonna make you a star...’ I borrowed the money and organized everything myself with vague guidance from Mark and Curtis. After I made that record I wanted to get a band together. I think Andy Stratton had more of a commercial feel about it and I didn't want to continue with that so getting Null and Void together was about getting away from any sort of commercial sound.”

The third or fourth release for All The Madmen (depending on how you rate the Review's *England's Glory* 7”), the “I Don't Know / Evil Minds” single was released in 1980. With Graham Fallows behind the kit, Andy would play the other instruments. The now extremely collectible single (both with anarcho sleuths and killed-by-death connoisseurs) of early Kinks, garage band pop was an interesting anomaly along the lines of Pete Fender's *Four Formulas* EP.

With a bit more encouragement and assistance from the Mob, Andy would then find himself in a power trio known as Null And Void.

Andy, “Mark Wilson and Curtis knew this bloke called John who had rented a big house in the country in Seend near Devizes Wiltshire. A group of us went to live there...me, Mark Hedge, Mark Wilson, Curtis, Max, Adie. In the weeks before we went I remember encouraging Mark Hedge to learn the bass and then get him to play along with me while I played on the guitar. I knew Adie from when we had played in the band Devices, so we asked him to play drums. I did the singing because there was no one else around to do it.”

“The Mob and Null and Void had a permanent drummer problem, and often shared drummers, in a nice way, there was no fighting. So the only difference in the Null and Void line-up was what drummer was playing with us at any one time. It was always me and Mark from start to the finish of the band. The first drummer was Adie, he left after we all left the house in Seend. When we arrived in London we did a short stint with Marrio. We met Marrio because he was living in Hackney and we used to see him around so he got involved. He played on the first Null and Void album cassette. I can't remember why but Marrio couldn't continue with us. We had spoken with Josef and he was keen to join Null and Void, so he took over on the drums. It's difficult to remember exactly the timing of who went here and who went there but somehow after the album and single Josef left and we got Adie to play with us on a tour of Belgium, but he went back to Somerset on our return.”

“We started drifting away from the anarcho scene and we found a drummer called Ralph Parker. He was from Weymouth and was one of the Weymouth punks who lived in London causing chaos. No, not really, they were very well behaved. At the time he joined the band he was squatting a flat over the road from where I was living in Cross Street, Islington. Anyway he liked his heavy metal like AC/DC but also liked funky stuff. Null and Void wanted to change the style of the music and get more rhythm into it and Ralph's drumming and attitude suited that. Ralph was our last drummer and the band finished after that.”

When the band was ready to perform live, it was again with their pals the Mob, at first doing just about all of their gigs together.

Andy, “Mark Wilson had a little camper and we helped him paint it red and black because they were the anarchist colors. We would put the equipment in the van, my guitar stack, Curtis' bass stack and Adies' drums. We would expect a PA to be at the venue. We wore clothes from charity shops and modified them rather than trendy stuff from the Kings Road. Nothing against the stuff from the Kings Road we just didn't have the money for it. Our first gigs were all with the Mob playing in village halls pubs and town hall type places usually in the West Country. For those who don't know the West Country, it's the little leg that sticks out of the bottom left of England. They were promoted by fly posting in the towns where we were about to play and networking with local punks. The fly posting often drew attention. Grungy punks running 'round with buckets of paste and posters slapping them on the walls and lamp posts then running off. I remember the odd old gentleman getting upset and ripping them down whilst complaining. The gigs were usually well attended and didn't normally involve any trouble.”

“Once we moved to London we very soon started doing our own gigs, which helped us make our own name. To give you a few examples of typical gigs we used to play...there was the Centro Iberico where we played quite a few times. It was an anarchy center type place on Harrow Road in West London. We rarely packed a venue but there would always be decent attendance. Then there was an open-air free event that used to take place in Meanwhile Gardens in the afternoon on a weekend. This was a tiny little park by a bridge that crossed the canal not far from Westbourne Park Tube. They used to set up a stage and a PA system. The park used to be flat at the bottom and then bank up like a small Roman amphitheater, which was convenient for everyone to be able to see. People would hang out for the afternoon drinking and watching the bands. Anyone could just walk in and watch or stand on the bridge as they were passing and listen. There would usually be an all-day schedule with many bands playing. Also there was The Clarendon, which was a pub. It had a larger venue upstairs and a smaller one downstairs. We used to always be asked to play downstairs. We weren't famous enough to fill the upstairs venue! They used to serve some really strong ales, and we usually left there rolling drunk. The Clarendon was on Hammersmith Broadway, which is quite a big area with a four-lane road going 'round it. Unfortunately it has now been ‘razed to the ground’ and they have built a bus, tube station, and shopping center there. There was the Pied Bull in Islington. The Pied Bull, also no longer there, was a pub with a venue bolted on the side where they had previously had the lounge bar. Someone called Griff kindly sent me a recording of a gig we did there in 1982, which was interesting to hear. We did a short tour with Zounds once where we went to places like Stevenage, Doncaster, Northampton, and Manchester. I remember it being fucking freezing. I think you can handle the cold better when you are younger, but that certainly stands out as a cold time. The gigs were good, although I received something from someone called Nuzz who had a copy of a fanzine from Stevenage saying that Null and void played to empty hall. I think the one we did in Manchester was a bit like that too. I don't remember the name of the venue in Manchester but it looked like a big building in the middle of a bombsite. It was freezing inside and the other bands were very thrashy. I don't remember playing, but I bet they didn't like us."

"When Ralph joined the band we played places like the Bingo Hall in Islington which was squatted as a venue for bands. It was and I think still exists as venue close to the Highbury and Islington roundabout. It was an abandoned bingo hall that was liberated for the people. In fact a huge amount of property was abandoned in those days, hard to imagine in these days of the property boom."

Because they were with the Mob, when the group's bus broke down in London and the Mob decided to stay, so did Null and Void.

Andy, "We ended up in London because the bus Mark Wilson bought, and that we all lived on for a short time, broke down in Brougham Road Hackney London. The bus was an image thing—hippy punks, grungy freaky types rolling into your town."

"Quite a sight in those days. We came to London to do some gigs and see some people. So, anyway, we stayed because there were plenty of houses to just move straight into. There were loads of people all doing the same thing so it was a great place, lots of people to meet. Once we were there that was it. Personally I have been here ever since, not Brougham Road…London. Life has moved along quite fast and now here I am."

With the relocation to London, Null and Void began developing more of an identity. The first major change was having a drummer, Marrio. The group also began playing with a variety of bands mostly in the anarcho circles. Soon, they would record their first tape, the seven-song *The Four Minute Warning*.

Andy, "When I was helping Ian Glasper with the Null and Void chapter in his book I didn't have a copy of the tape and I couldn't remember much about it. Now I do, and can now say that Marrio was the drummer and that some of the songs appeared on the next album. I have a copy now and quite frankly it's pretty rough. It was recorded in the 62 Brougham Road rehearsal room. 62 Brougham Road was Josef's house. He had a rehearsal room upstairs that was covered with old mattresses and carpet for soundproofing. It was done totally live and recorded straight onto a cassette machine. It seems it wasn't self-titled at all, but called *The Four Minute Warning*."

A very raw garage recording, the title track is one of the most blunt political statements on the tape and it's an instrumental! Other songs like the lead off track, "Hide Away," tend to the poetic.

You all just sit there gathering dust
There must be someone left here I can trust
The pain, the heartache and the misery
I can't believe it's all in aid of a new society

Perhaps the raw recording suited their form of melodic garage punk. Maybe it was because even the anarchos needed a break from the political slogans. But the tape was very well received.

Andy, "Well it was nice to have a product—it was a way of promoting ourselves. The response was good and we used to sell it at gigs"

Though initially existing in the anarcho scene as introduced to them by the Mob, the group was ultimately heading in their own direction not only musically and lyrically. Though they would play shows at anarchy centers and do the benefits and were certainly involved with the cassette culture. They were also very much in their own rotation around the sun.

Andy, "It depends what you mean. In the beginning the bands we knew personally were Zounds and the Mob so I suppose they were our contemporaries and the bands we were closest to. As time went by I got to know various people from other bands, but we weren't associated with them as such. Null and Void sort of floated about in their own orbit, I mean we were doing our own thing."

"It was about trying to be different so I think we always tried to distance ourselves more and more as time went by, although having said that we were definitely in the DIY sector of art and crafts. I liked the music that was mainstream punk even though it was the music from the late '70s rather than the '80s. The '80s to me were the most disastrous period for popular music. There was very little that was inspirational. Having said that though the Chili Peppers were good—they were original with their music."

Though maybe not 100% given to the scene, anarcho punk allowed Andy and Null and Void the freedom they desired to be musicians and thus made sense to them.

Andy, "For me the anarcho scene was a label for not having a label. It was a license to think outside of the box, so you don't end up being a human robot."

On the strength of the tape and their reputation in London, the group embarked on an early trip to the continent.

Andy, "I think everyone was getting asked to go on tour in mainland Europe and we were no exception. In Europe, they were really interested in UK punk bands, any band. I suppose because punk started in the UK anything English was good. The gigs were always really good. There was always a good turnout and the people really appreciated you.

To make the history of this band just a little more confusing, in February of 1982, the group would go into a different studio and record a new cassette release. With some of the same songs re-recorded from their first tape, the second release was also called *The Four Minute Warning*.

At this point Josef from the Mob and Zounds was filling with the band on drums. Through their growing connections in the anarcho scene, they got to know Pete Fender of the Fatal Microbes, Rubella Ballet, and Omega Tribe. At Xntrix Studios, home of the Poison Girls, Fender recorded their 12-song sophomore release.

Andy, "It was good to record *The 4 Minute Warning*. It felt as though we were making progress. People liked our music and were very happy to get their hands on a half-descent recording. I felt like we were different, that our songs were different. We had someone called Delia who sang on the album backing vocals. She came on tour with to Belgium, but said she couldn't handle it after the first gig and went back to the UK and we never saw her again. We had Pete Nothing (real name Pete Marshall) doing some of his poetry on the album as well. His lyrics were a bit more to the point than mine and offered a contrast."

"Pete Fender, real name Dan, was a good person to work with. He was professional enough to get the job done but laid back enough for it to be a good experience. I think we recorded the drums and bass together, then recorded the guitar and vocals. I don't think we did any overdubs though."

On the new tape "Hide Away" became "Can't Hide," "Afraid" became "Only 17," and "Blank Pages." "Four Minute Warning" and "Gods Own Words" are redone. Strong new songs included the personal "Sometimes I Get So Lonely."

Movements with rhythm and feeling so deep
That drive you on in step to keep
Bastard fire you can't control
A raging inferno will break out of its hold

Andy, "The first tape was very rough and ready and the second tape was better organized. We had been gigging a lot and developed as a band so we had better songs and the performance was tighter."

Though his memory is a little fuzzy, the group seems to have made at least a second trip to Europe. Andy, "I can't remember, but possible two separate occasions, maybe more!" A friendship with Not So Brave Records in Belgium led to the group's one and only vinyl release.

Andy, "Me, Mark Hedge, Josef Porta, and Gemma. Gemma very kindly did some backing vocals. Gemma was Pete Fenders sister. Mark and I thought that 'Still' was a pretty strong song so we decided it was the one. I also remember talking with Andy from Crass about which track he thought would be good for a single. I had given him some of our songs previously to see if Crass wanted to put out a record for Null and Void. They weren't interested. I think it was because we weren't political enough and we didn't suit the Crass label's image. On reflection I think that was for the best. After discussing it with Phil of Not So Brave Records in Belgium, we settled on it. Phil was a really good bloke and we enjoyed working with him. I don't know what happened to him, I've tried to Google him a few times but found nothing."

Nearly retro in its classic garage structure, there can definitely be comparisons made to the early Kinks as well as early Subway Sect—kind of a mutant rhythm and blues. Strangely it's the bass playing that's most reminiscent of the Mob and not the drumming.

Andy, "The recording was great, it was nice to have a record company pay for it. It showed that someone else thought we could sell records. So we were grateful to Phil for the opportunity to do it. We recorded it with Pete Fender and, as always, he was really good to work with. We tried to be a bit creative by adding some other dimensions. I played a part I had written for the piano and split it so there was some at the beginning and the remainder at the end. Also we had Pete Nothing doing some of his poetry again over some of my guitar played backwards. I was, and still am happy with the record. I think it shows our ability at the time and the A and B side showed a contrast in musical style."

The *Still* 7" would be the group's only vinyl. The record marked an end to the original version of the band and the set they had been playing the previous few years.

Andy, "We didn't talk to anyone about doing another record after that because I think we had reached a turning point after that single. We started to have outside influences with the music. I was starting to listen to more soul, funk, and reggae. Mark had always listened to a lot of reggae and dub—in fact he should have been a Rasta instead of a punk. We wanted to change our musical direction and when Ralph became the new drummer we recorded a cassette with two songs on it. 'Slow Down' and 'Harder to Remember.' We recorded them in a studio in Walthamstow, East London. Andy Palmer from Crass helped with the production for which we were grateful because it's always nice to get other experienced ears in the studio and bounce ideas off them. These two songs showed a little more rhythm and were definitely a change in direction. We recorded the bass and drums together and then put down the guitar tracks, then a couple of vocal tracks. After that we recorded four songs at Joe's studio called Lucky 8, which was the last time we recorded."

Ironically, it seems like name recognition alone might have helped make their next recording a successful release as the group sort of stumbled into a recording session with Joe Strummer.

Andy, "Well to cut a long story short I saw him in a pub in Camden and asked if he had received a tape from me. He said 'no,' but if I dropped one 'round he would listen to it. Being a man of his word he did listen to it, and sometime later he called me at home and asked if we wanted to come into his studio to do a session."

Though the recording was a new beginning for the group, it wasn't met with much interest in the anarcho community who were not exactly the ideal audience for this sort of music.

Andy, "It was a good recording, and we still (by some miracle) have the master tapes, all the other master tapes from other recordings are lost. It was hard work though because we were a bit out of shape physically. We weren't living the healthiest of lifestyles. We had the studio engineer managing the recording and he set it up so we could basically play together live. He used an overhead mic on the drums and a bass drum mic. Then the bass was plugged direct into the desk and the guitar was mic'd up from a fender combo amp. The guitar sound is pretty good, dirty with lots of sustain. The overall feel is good because we all played together with only a couple of overdubs and backing vocals. Joe was working upstairs at his desk doing his paper work. He came down now and again to see how it was going and offer bits of advice. When we had finished we all went to the pub over the road and Joe got the landlord to put the tape on so we could listen to it while we were having a couple of pints and a chat."

"We made a cassette of the tracks and sold it at gigs but we didn't sell many because we were becoming increasing out to lunch, we didn't play that many gigs in the end."

With gigs becoming few and far between and not much interest in their last recording, the group eventually split.

Andy, "It fell apart rather than split up. We weren't earning any money and it was difficult to survive and enjoy life like that."

With Andy and Josef continuing the play music, Mark hasn't picked up the bass since and, sadly, their last drummer Ralph passed away.

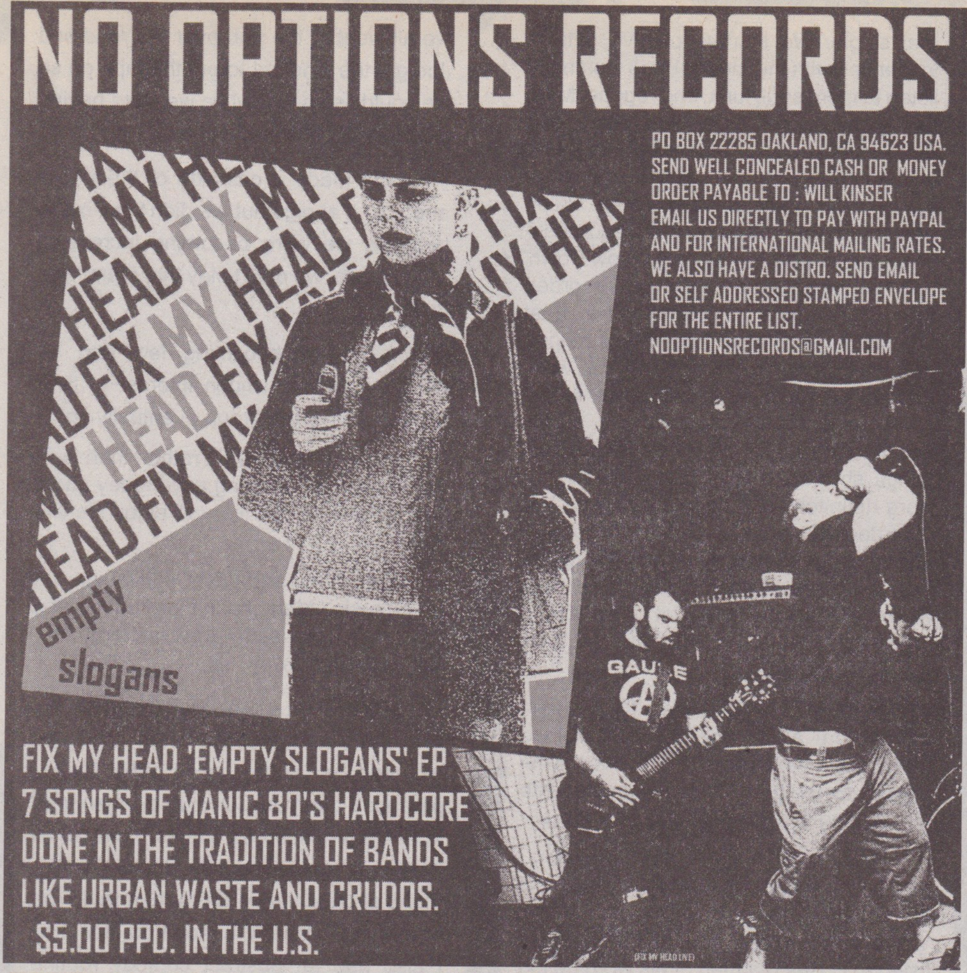
Andy, "Yes, I kept on with the music. I recorded as themush.com in 2000 and released an album called *Why Me?*. I produced them as CDRs and I managed to sell a few hundred copies. I played all the instruments except the drums—I got a friend of mine Jamie O'Gorman to do the drumming for me. We didn't do any gigs. I also had an abstract comedy routine in the late '80s that involved music with another friend of mine, Ronnie Fraser, we were called Frank And Ernie. That was fun and I hope to make the material available on the internet soon. We met up recently and we are talking about doing some more work together, so I'm looking forward to that.

"I have recently started working with a really good singer, Diana Raymond, and we are getting material together for a band we are calling 'Di My Darling.' I expect us to be gigging by the summer."

"Josef, obviously has a well-known band called Blythe Power. It's a shame but Ralph 'shuffled off this mortal coil,' I'm not in touch with Adie, and Mark hasn't done any music."

But there's no regrets even for one of many anarcho bands that had much more potential than they lived up to.

Andy, "The band was great, I look back and think if we had been a little more organized we could have produced more records and gone further."



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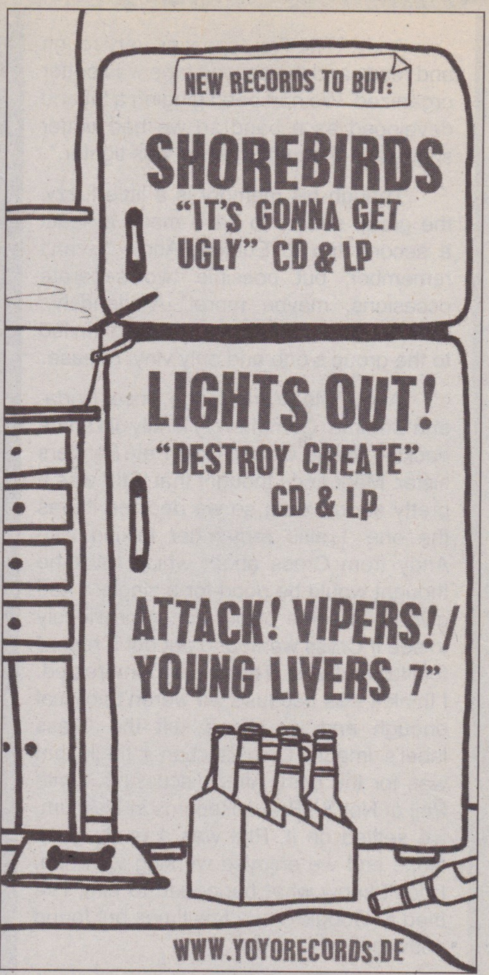

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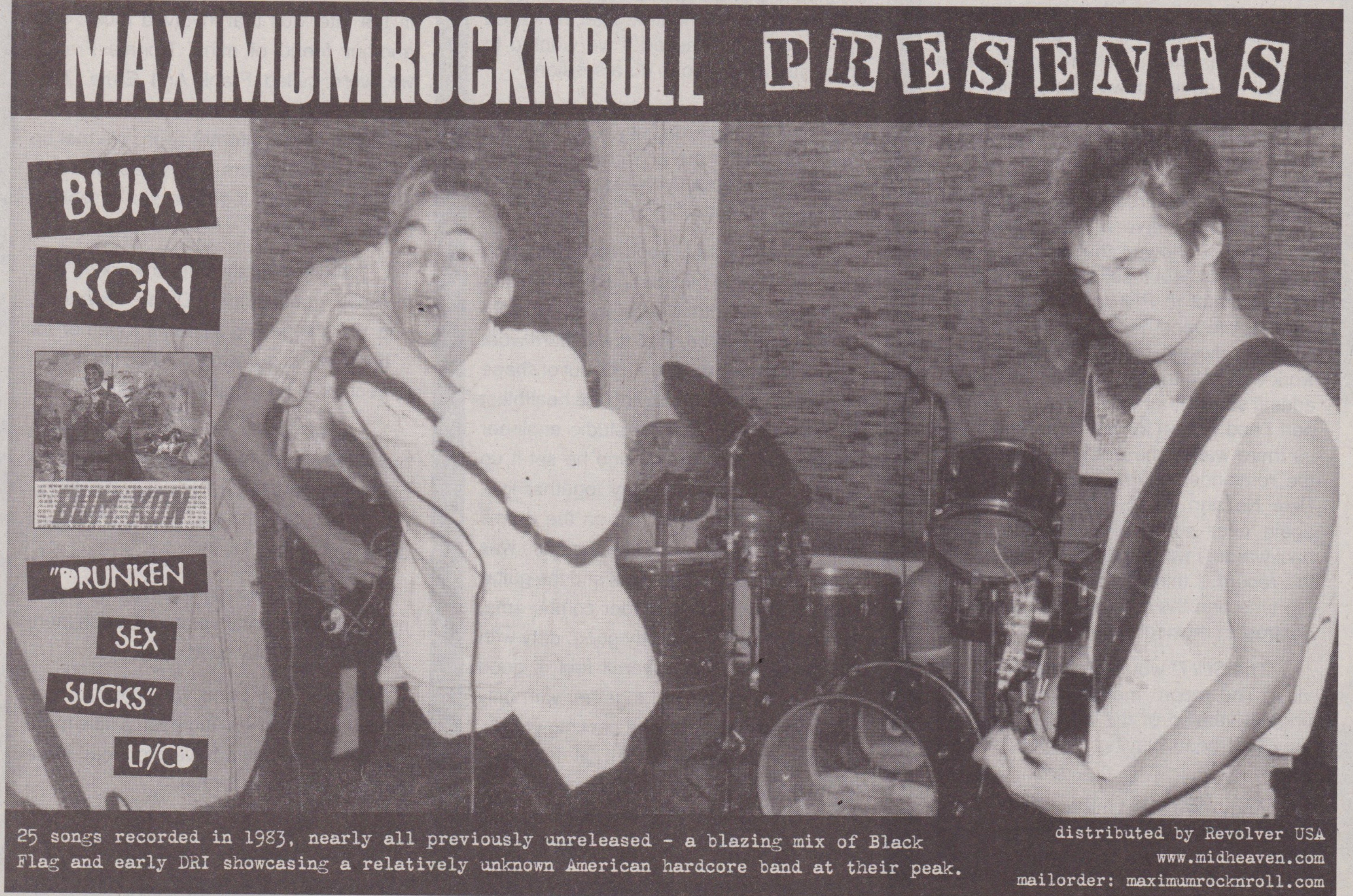

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COCO COMA

Live Photos by Chris Anderson

With their frenzied, furious but always-tuneful barrage of garage punk, CoCoComa has been a fixture in the Chicago scene since 2005. Their live shows—laden with racing drums, overdriven guitar, shout-along choruses, and wailing Farfisa riffs—are always energetic and memorable. They've also been prolific on vinyl, with numerous singles on various labels and their self-titled, full-length album on Goner Records. I sat down with the three-piece in the alley behind The Hideout in Chicago on August 30th, 2008. Since the time of this interview, the band has gone on a brief hiatus, with bassist/keyboardist Mike Fitzpatrick leaving the band for New York and Bill and Lisa Roe taking time out to become parents. Bill and Lisa plan to continue the band in the near future, with a second full-length, Things Are Not All Right, *arriving on Goner Records in 2009. Interview by Jeff Rice.*

MRR: Ok, how about just a brief introduction of everybody in CoCoComa?

Bill: Bill Roe. I play drums and do lead vocals.

Lisa: I'm Lisa Roe. I play guitar and sing a little bit.

Mike: Mike Fitzpatrick. I play the drums...and keyboards!

Lisa: Drums and keyboards?

Mike: Wait, I don't play the drums! I play the bass.

MRR: So, I heard you guys were originally just a two-piece band. How did you get started and how did Mike end up in the band?

Bill: First of all, Lisa had sort of always wanted to play in a band with me and I had always resisted. I'd played in a couple of bands before with significant others, and it had always ended really horribly. Or it just killed a bunch of friendships because of jealousy. So, I was kinda like, "No! No! No!" But we were at the first Gonerfest probably three or four years ago...

Lisa: Three years ago.

Bill: ...And we saw the King Khan and BBQ Show play. They were just two guys and I remember I was so astounded they were making so much noise. It wasn't even that they were making so much noise, but that people were into it and dancing. Like, I'd seen other two-piece bands before, but this was just kinda different for some reason. I mean, they had finely crafted songs and people were dancing, so I remember leaning over to her and being like, "Alright, let's do it. Let's give it a shot." So, that weekend we were kinda joking around with Mike, telling him he was gonna play keyboards for us.

Mike: Really?

Bill: Yeah.

Lisa: You were originally supposed to be in the band but you never showed up for practice.

Mike: Oh shit! [*laughs*]

Bill: We recruited you when you were drunk, so I dunno if you remember.

Mike: I don't remember.

MRR: Did you guys play any shows as a two-piece?

Lisa: We played about three or four shows.

Bill: Four shows, I think.

Lisa: Yeah, I dunno, maybe it was the way I played guitar or something, but it just seemed like maybe it needed to be filled out a little bit more. With the kind of music we listen to, most of the bands have at least a bass or keyboard or something like that. Once we started writing more songs it seemed liked it needed more than drums and guitar.

MRR: Yeah, I'd imagine that it would be tough for a drummer playing your songs to compensate for the lack of bass. You'd have to play a lot harder.

Bill: Yeah, I had to play a lot harder and it really made me try and come up with some more interesting beats than just a "thump-wack-thump-wack" kind of a thing.

MRR: Yeah, I've noticed that you do play a lot on the bass drum in your songs.

Bill: Yeah, it's really just kind of like force of habit at this point. Kind of like how I have a high-hat, but I don't really play it all that much. And the whole reason I started singing was because Lisa wasn't going to do it.

Lisa: And Bill's got the voice of an angel! [*laughs*]

Mike: Charlie's Angel!

MRR: So, how did you end up working Mike into the band and how did he end up playing the keyboard?

Mike: Well, *they* decided on the keyboard...And I had a keyboard! It was just sitting around.

Lisa: We kinda just didn't want it to be a typical...Well, adding a keyboard makes it sort of a typical garage band, but with three pieces there aren't a lot of bands that are just guitar, drums, and keyboard. But, as we write more songs, it's probably split 50/50 between using bass and using keyboard, if not more than half songs with bass at this point.

MRR: Mike, do you have much experience playing keyboard in bands prior to this?

Mike: No, I never played keyboard. I played the piano in college since we had one in our dorm. But I got a Farfisa at a garage sale...No, it was on eBay for $400, so I put it to good use.

MRR: Now, Mike and Lisa both also play in another band together—Headache City. So, I'm wondering, since I've been in multiple bands with the same people before. How do you two not hate each other?

Mike: There's a fine line between love and hate! [*laughs*]

Lisa: Well, Mike deals with my, you know, personality!

Mike: If one of the two bands has a lot more shit going on than the other, it can get a little weird.

Lisa: There've been points where it's been a little weird.

Mike: We get over it.

Bill: You guys don't take it personally, I don't think.

Lisa: It's easy to get over it and because of the way Headache City works versus the way CoCoComa works. (In Headache City) Mike and Dave write most of the songs, while in CoCoComa, Bill and I write most of the songs.

MRR: So, you'd say you have a favorable division of labor between the two bands?

Lisa: Yeah.

Mike: Pretty much.

MRR: And you guys have toured together—both Headache City and CoCoComa, right?

Bill: Yeah, a couple times.

Lisa: East Coast, West Coast, and Europe.

Bill: Yeah, our first tour was in '06.

Lisa: CoCoComa just had our first single out.

Bill: And our first show was down in Austin for South By Southwest, and we were going from there to the West Coast. We'd literally got our first single the day before we left and it hadn't even been released on the Shit Sandwich website. We just had copies with us, and no one knew who the fuck we were, but whatever. I wish we could tour the West Coast now that we have a few singles and an LP.

Mike: It was fun to tour with both bands because some nights—the two bands are different enough—people would love the shit out of one band and then another night they love the other band. So being in both bands, it was great.

Lisa: Especially in Europe—it's so weird because we'd play something like fifteen nights in a row and there was no rhyme or reason as to why people liked one band over the other. It didn't matter who played first or second.

MRR: Now, Headache City had been around for a good amount of time before CoCoComa, right?

Mike: Probably two years.

Lisa: And I wasn't even in the band initially—I was a replacement drummer.

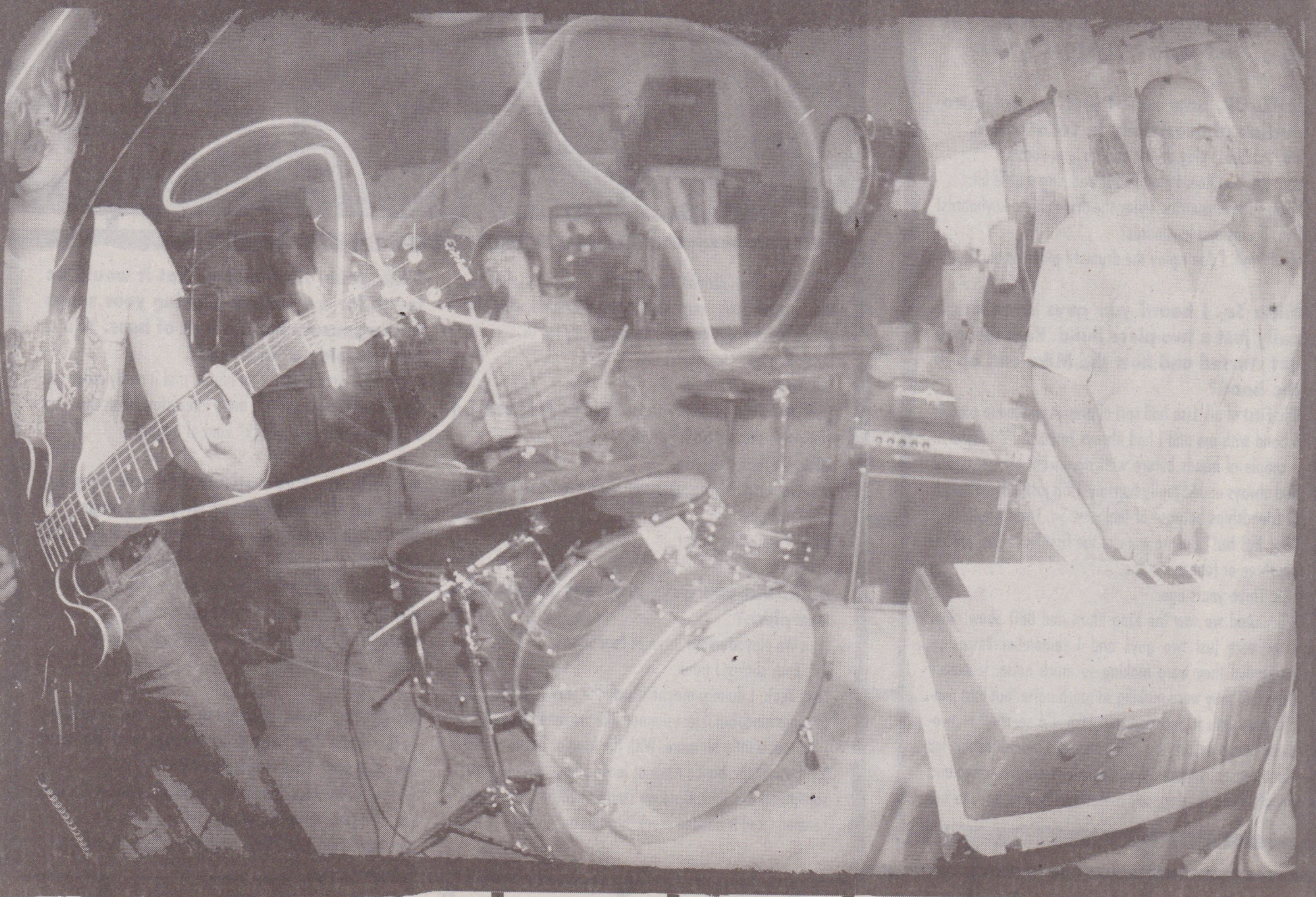
Mike: A scab! [*laughs*]

MRR: Did it help being in another band that had played around a lot and had some records out?

Lisa: Probably. Like, the way CoCoComa got to play at Gonerfest was really via the reputation of Headache City.

Bill: Definitely. Yeah, we had only played maybe three shows at that point and we were emailing Eric and Scott Rogers in Memphis trying to drum up a show and those guys were like, "We're working on it!" But each time it fell through and so, I don't know what exactly prompted them to ask us in particular. We had played with the Rat Traps here in Chicago for our third show, and I guess they were very complimentary when they went back to Memphis. So, they asked us to fill in the spot of the Detonations from New Orleans, who were supposed to play, but Hurricane Katrina had just happened and all their shit was totaled. So, it was just dumb luck, really, that we got to play Gonerfest.

Lisa: Mike had just joined the band, but he couldn't come down for the weekend. That would have been his first show. But we played Gonerfest and it went well.



MRR: Is that how you hooked up with Goner to do an LP or did you know those guys previously?

Bill: The first time I actually met them was at the first Gonerfest.

Mike: Were the Dutch Masters up here before that?

Lisa: The Dutch Masters were up here before CoCoComa even existed, because Headache City played with them and that was my first or second Headache City show.

Mike: At Cal's.

Bill: I guess that's right. I forgot all about that. I guess that was when we met them.

Lisa: So we played at Gonerfest, Mike started playing with us, and then they saw us again at South By Southwest when we were on tour. They emailed and they were like, "We'd love to put out a single"! Bill emailed back, "Hell yeah"! And then they said, "How about an LP, too"? We were like, "Sure"!

Bill: We were speechless.

MRR: You guys toured Europe recently. How did it go? Anywhere you went over particularly well?

Lisa: I think all the shows in Germany were great and well received. Scandinavia was fun and weird, but Stockholm was really the only big show we had.

Bill: Stockholm was a really good show, but I think that Thomas Savage, who booked us there and runs Savage Records, really works his ass off, promotes, gets lots of people to come, and makes sure it's a really fun party. Not that the other promoters weren't working, but I think he's been around for so long, he knows enough people to get them out. But a couple of the shows up in Scandinavia, like the one in Norway...

Mike: Halden.

Bill: And the one in Göteborg.

Lisa: That one was just at a terrible club.

Bill: Yeah, the club it was originally booked at got changed, so that was weird. And the one in Alden was sort of like a fill-in show.

Lisa: In a sleepy little town full of drunk behavior!

Bill: It was actually a beautiful town. I didn't think anyone would show up, but we actually got about 30 people, and it ended up being a lot of fun.

Lisa: It was good.

Bill: But yeah, in Germany we were really well received. Our first show in Reims, France was really good, too.

Mike: We ended up playing a lot of out-of-the-way places where bands don't really get to so much, so everywhere we went people were pretty receptive.

Lisa: Yeah, we sold a ton of shit.

MRR: Now, prior to going to Europe, did a decent amount of people know who you were or was it pretty much up to the European promoters to spread the word?

Mike: Being on Goner helped a lot.

Bill: For sure.

Lisa: I mean, we went to towns and our records would be there and the record had been out a few months, so...

Mike: And Goner has really good distribution in Europe.

Lisa: So most people had heard of us.

Bill: Maybe they hadn't heard the record yet, but I think just the brand recognition of being on Goner helped a lot. So, I dunno, I don't think anybody walked away disappointed.

Mike: Nobody moshed to us!

Bill: Somebody must have. Mike did, every night!

Lisa: Or the guy who told Dave (Headache City) that he wasn't a very good guitar player! [*laughs*]

Bill: [*Exaggerated Euro accent*] You...are a great bass player. Guitarist? Not so much.

MRR: We've mentioned Headache City quite a few times tonight. Do people ever confuse CoCoComa with Headache City?

Bill: People have come up to me and said, "When is Headache City playing again?", or they'll ask Dave about CoCoComa, so it happens, but I don't care.

Mike: You know what's funny, too? People will come up to me and say they love CoCoComa and then say "Headache City sucks"! And I'm like, "I'm in that band"!

Lisa: That's the funny thing that happens. Being in both bands, that's fine, since it's a compliment either way, but still, it hurts your feelings! And you're like, "Why"?

Mike: Not "Why?", but "Why would you tell me"? I'm in both bands!

Lisa: Yeah, it's a dick move.

MRR: It's not like you're difficult to recognize!

Mike: Right.

MRR: One thing I've noticed is that your LP has a very distinct cover. Who does your artwork?

Bill: I did the artwork for the LP and the Goner single. Actually, the LP artwork is a rip off of the Flamin' Groovies *Supersnazz* LP. It's one of my favorite records of all time and also one of my favorite album covers, so I just wanted to pay a little homage to Bob Zoell. I drew it all out and scanned it into Photoshop, colored it in, and painstakingly edited it, night after night, for many, many weeks!

MRR: The cover definitely stands out from everything else on the label or really anything else I see in the record bins.

Bill: Thanks. Yeah, that's funny, the guys at the label said that the guy who normally does their cover stuff said, "Finally you guys did a nice looking record cover!". [*laughs*] You know, it's not a black and white, paste-together cover.

MRR: Your sound also stands out compared to other bands that usually play when I see you. You're generally a bit faster and more aggressive than most "garage" bands, but you don't really fall into the hardcore category either. Was that a conscious choice?

Lisa: I don't think it's really intentional, but I find myself, even with Headache City, wanting to play everything faster.

Mike: I always want to play everything faster!

Lisa: And I just think that playing faster is just more fun for live shows, you know, you get excited...

Mike: I think also the hardcore thing is there because of the sing-along parts.

Bill: Yeah, a lot of woah-oh-ohs.

MRR: Bill, you do most of the vocals while drumming. Do you ever feel like you're going to rupture something while singing and playing like that? [*laughs*)]

Bill: All the time! I can't play for more than a half hour because...I will die! Yeah, I don't really scream as much as I used to in the beginning of the band because I sort of figured out how to sing and play at the same time.

Mike: He sings from the diaphragm!

Bill: Hey, it was good advice! But yeah, I actually figured out how to sing without screaming. But there were times that I'd be screaming and I could feel veins popping out of my head like they were going to burst all over my drums.

Lisa: And also you kind of had to learn that for touring. You couldn't exactly go out screaming every night and expect to have a voice the next day.

Bill: Yeah. Lots of Throat Coat tea.

MRR: Yeah, you wouldn't want to get those things on your vocal chords... Nodules?

Bill: Nodules! Hey, if it happened to Otis Redding, it can happen to me!

MRR: You guys are a Chicago band, but are any of you actually from there originally?

Bill: No. None of us are from here.

Mike: We're transplants.

Lisa: Yeah, Bill is from Texas, Mike is from Connecticut, and I'm from Ohio.

MRR: Bill, what brought you here from Texas?

Bill: I was born and raised in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area and spent most of my formative years in Weatherford, Texas—fourth grade through high school. Once I graduated I went to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 and just never left.

MRR: Had you been in any bands in Texas?

Bill: Not in any bands, really...I played the drums, but living in small town Weatherford I could never get anything going. So I moved here and started playing around a bit with some folks. One of my roommates hung around the Autonomous Zone.

MRR: Right, the anarchist center.

Bill: Not super-involved...just some of the weird hangers-on and we sort of ended up being involved in the early '90s Chicago No Wave scene. I played with some of those people in a few bands, but nothing ever really came of it.

MRR: So, is CoCoComa the band you've spent the most time in and that's played the most shows?

Bill: No, I played with another band called the 100 Proof Band that started as a Flamin' Groovies-ish rock band but ended up being this southern rock-y thing that I wasn't really feeling. So, I left that band and that was pretty much the time that we started forming this band.

MRR: Mike, tell us about your musical lineage and what brought you here to Chicago.

Mike: I came here after college just for the summer of '97 and ended up staying here for the next eleven years. Being in Connecticut, I was going to Boston, New York, and Rhode Island just to see shows. So, I ended up coming here for the summer and that summer and fall of 1997 was about the best time I've ever seen for shows. Every fucking weekend there were awesome shows. So, that didn't hurt! That, and the fact that Chicago was and still is so cheap...I just loved it and ended up staying. I didn't really have any reason to be here at all. I get that question a lot!

MRR: Were you in any bands prior to the two you're in right now?

Mike: I was never in a band in Connecticut. When I moved here I was in a band called the Disasters, which never really did anything. We played around Chicago but never lasted long enough to record anything. After that, I was in the White Outs with Dave from Headache City and that lasted a few years. We put out a single with Norah (Shit Sandwich), who was also in Headache City.

Lisa: And The Latest...

Mike: Yeah, and The Latest, which was with Bill from CoCoComa. We keep it in the family! [*laughs*]

MRR: And Lisa, what about you?

Lisa: Before Headache City and CoCoComa I played in a girl band called Sugar Walls.

MRR: Inspired by Sheena Easton?

Lisa: Bill came up with the name! [*laughs*] We played about nine shows and broke up. We recorded, but never put anything out.

Mike: Didn't you do a Dicks song?

Lisa: Yeah, "Rich Daddy."

Bill: They sounded like the Dictators—it was great!

Lisa: We didn't! But thanks. We would've been decent if we would've stuck around.

Mike: You would've made it! You would've gone all the way to the top! [*laughs*]

Lisa: That was my meal ticket! No, we were working on being an OK band, but we broke up.

Bill: You exploded.

MRR: Now, Lisa, you play both drums and guitar. Which one did you pick up first?

Lisa: My first instrument was the lute! [*laughs*]

Mike: Wow!

Bill: Not too shabby.

Lisa: No, I took guitar lessons for about six months when I was thirteen, but I never practiced, so my mom wouldn't pay for them anymore. I played a little bit here and there in high school and college and, once I moved to Chicago, I started playing in a band. So, guitar is definitely my primary instrument. Headache City was losing their original drummer and I said I'd join. I don't think they realized I'd never played drums before!

Bill: I had to give her a crash course in three weeks.

Lisa: Bill gave me the crash course and made me cry about five times!

Bill: Apparently I'm not a very good teacher! Or I'm the best teacher because she's now a really good drummer.

Lisa: Bill thought that maybe it would be a good idea to give me negative reinforcement.

Bill: It's been proven to work!

Lisa: And my personality makes it so I want to be the best at something immediately. But, drums are pretty hard to learn and I haven't learned a new skill in my adult years. So that was kinda weird, just trying to learn something new and being under the gun to learn it in three weeks.

Bill: And you were the drummer—they weren't going to ask anyone else. You were in, so you kinda had to learn!

Mike: No, she wasn't totally in!

Lisa: Mike let me slide. I could tell he wasn't totally happy about it.

Mike: Well, she was playing at the first try-out and we just asked her, "Could you be a little more aggressive?" After that it was automatically good. We felt like a band. We were worried we'd have to spend like a year getting back up to speed, but it worked out great.

Bill: You're welcome. [*laughs*]

Lisa: Thank you, Mike, for that compliment! Something Bill never does!

MRR: So, Lisa, you teach guitar to younger girls in the Girls Rock Chicago summer camp. Did that experience of

learning drums help you with teaching?
Lisa: I was kinda scared because I'm pretty much self-taught and I don't have technique at all. It was probably the most rewarding thing I've ever done, but I was scared shitless because I didn't know how to teach guitar to anyone. But it ended up being really great and the girls that I taught were amazing. And the band that I taught ended up being the best! But yeah, I coached mainly eight and nine-year-olds and it turned out pretty cool.

MRR: So you've all been in Chicago for a long time. Are there any places around here that you particularly like to play?
Bill: I used to like playing the Fireside Bowl before they stopped doing shows. I always had fun there. In addition to it being all ages, you always felt like you could get away with doing anything there. And you pretty much could. We really like playing the Empty Bottle.
Lisa: Yeah, we feel comfortable there.
Bill: We used to live right next to it. That's where Lisa and I met and that's where we got married, too. We're friends with all the people who work there, so it's always nice to play there. The sound is really good in there, too.
Mike: Cal's has always had some of the best shows.
Lisa: Lots of fun, crazy shit happens there.
Mike: Cal's is downtown, in the Loop, in the middle of the financial district, and surrounded by skyscrapers. It's just an old man bar where you can drink on the sidewalk. It's changed lately, since they're trying to clean up the neighborhood and build condos down there, but for a while...
Lisa: For a minute, it was great.

MRR: Well, do you guys think that all the typical gentrification stuff, along with the possibility of the Olympics coming to Chicago, is going to have even more of a negative impact on the places you'll be able to play?
Lisa: Well, it seems like it's really gone downhill in the last few years.
Bill: Well, since I moved here in 1992, there are far fewer places to play music now. I say that meaning a bar with a stage to play on. There will always be spaces to go play, but I don't think there will be as many spaces with a sound system, a sound guy, and all that. You know, like a club.
Mike: Well, it also used to be that no matter who you are, if you were in a band, you could get a show. But that seems less likely nowadays. Those were the days...
Bill: But it's getting tougher now. There was that ordinance that the city tried to pass where you would need to pay some exorbitant fee for a cabaret license. And you'd have to keep buying and renewing that license.
Lisa: It didn't pass, but if the city keeps bringing it up, eventually it will pass at some point.

MRR: Yeah, it's happened to some other cities.
Bill: So I feel like it's only a matter of time before that happens here. I hope not. For someone who supposedly takes the Chicago city culture so seriously, Mayor Daley doesn't like the Chicago music scene too much.
Mike: Yeah, the first big thing to go was the Lounge Ax, which closed and became a sports bar.
Bill: That was the first really serious blow, since Lounge Ax was pretty much the premiere independent rock club in Chicago for a long time. The Empty Bottle has sort of supplanted it since then.

MRR: It seems like there are fewer and fewer places devoted specifically to independent music.
Bill: Especially for all-ages shows, there's hardly anything anymore. The Fireside was the main place for that.
Lisa: Yeah, we've never even played an all-ages show.
Mike: We hate the kids!

MRR: Do you guys actually have people under 21 who want to check you out?
Bill: Yeah, we've had a few people email us.
Mike: Wait, we did play an all-ages show at the Logan Square Auditorium with the Black Lips. The teenagers loved us!
Bill: That's true, we did! I forgot all about that. It went over well.
Lisa: It went over fine but no one was there just to see us.
Mike: Yeah, but people watched us. We love the kids!
Lisa: We take it back, now we love the kids.

MRR: Speaking of the kids, Mike, you have a kid and another one on the way, right?
Mike: It's true.

MRR: I assume you're all in your 30s.

Mike: We're getting old!

MRR: Pretty soon you'll be in your 60s like the Rolling Stones on their last tour...

Lisa: *Voodoo Lounge* tour!

MRR: But seriously, what do you guys do for work and how do you balance that with the band?

Mike: I don't think it's very hard, really.

Lisa: Well, first of all, we never really practice.

Mike: We don't have to practice.

Lisa: We're just that good! You can tell from the, um, craft of our songs... [*laughs*]

Mike: It also helps to have a significant other who supports your music.

Bill: Plus the city's not too expensive. You can hold down a decent job and still have time and money to play in bands.

MRR: Has it been difficult for you guys to tour since you've had a kid?

Mike: It was a little uncomfortable leaving the family to tour when that's my only vacation, but it was Europe and that's sort of a once-in-a-lifetime kind of thing. We made it work. And these guys are married to each other, so that makes it...

Bill: Real easy.

Mike: Yeah, real easy!

Lisa: We never fight!

Mike: [*Very obvious sarcasm*] Oh, they never, ever fight! I've never seen these guys fight on tour!

Lisa: When did we fight?

Mike: Ok, maybe not fights, but there were some, uh, uncomfortable moments.

Lisa: And Mike has to put out the fire.

Bill: It's basically when we're making-out in the backseat.

Lisa: Things get a little too hot!

Mike: Yeah, I have to get the fire hose out and spray 'em down.

Bill: What can I say? I'm a passionate man. [*laughs*]

MRR: On that note, let's wrap this up.

Mike: Yeah, I have to take a piss.

MRR: So, before we leave, any Chicago bands you'd like to talk up?

Lisa: Well, Bill is in a new band called A/V Murder with Jim from the Tyrades, Baseball Furies, and White Savage. They're terrific, they're really hot. [*laughs*]

Bill: Quite the vast musical pedigree.

Lisa: There haven't been too many new bands lately.

Bill: I haven't seen the Living Statues yet, but it's pretty much Screaming Yellow Zonkers without Colin. I heard they're supposed to be good. There's some recent bands like the Yolks, Tyler Jon Tyler...

Mike: Chronic Seizure—they're pretty damn good.

MRR: Finally, what's on the horizon for you guys? Any records or tours planned?

Lisa: We're going to be recording another full-length record in November.

Bill: It'll be on Goner Records. They said they wanted to do it.

Lisa: There probably won't be any tours anytime soon. We're sort of domesticating.

Mike: Nesting mode!

Bill: Sorry folks!

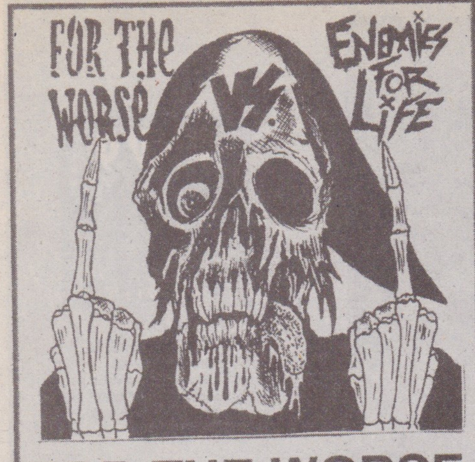
Lisa: If you want to see us, come to Chicago!

Bill: We'll be playing Chicago exclusively now until the end.

CoCoComa Discography:

1. *All I Give* 7" (Shit Sandwich Records, 2006)
2. Cococoma / The Mans - split 7"(Covert Pop!, 2006)
3. *6 1/4 - 125* 7" (Goner, 2006)
4. "She Gets Heavy (Holds Too Tight)" live audio and video - *Gonerfest 2* CD/DVD (Goner, 2006)
5. Cococoma / The Turpentine Brothers - split 7" (Sarah Mason's Medical Records, 2007)
6. CoCoComa - s/t LP/CD (Goner, 2007)
7. Cococoma / Hipshakes - split 7" (TicTacTotally, 2007)

Upcoming: *Things Are Not All Right* LP/CD (Goner, sometime in 2009)



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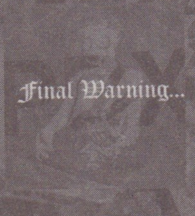

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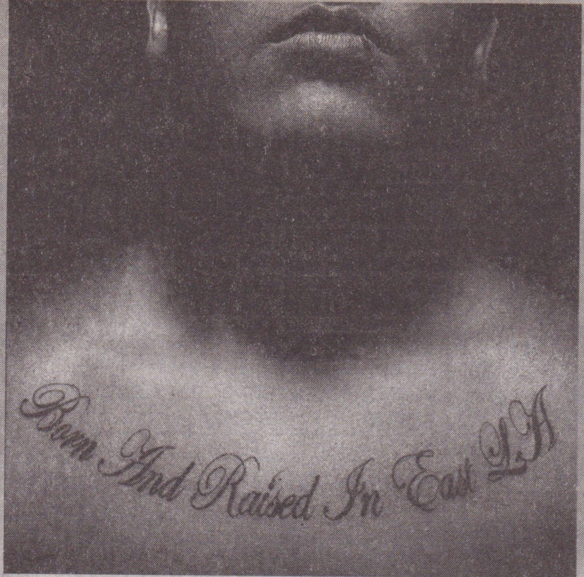
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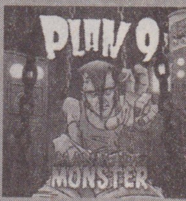

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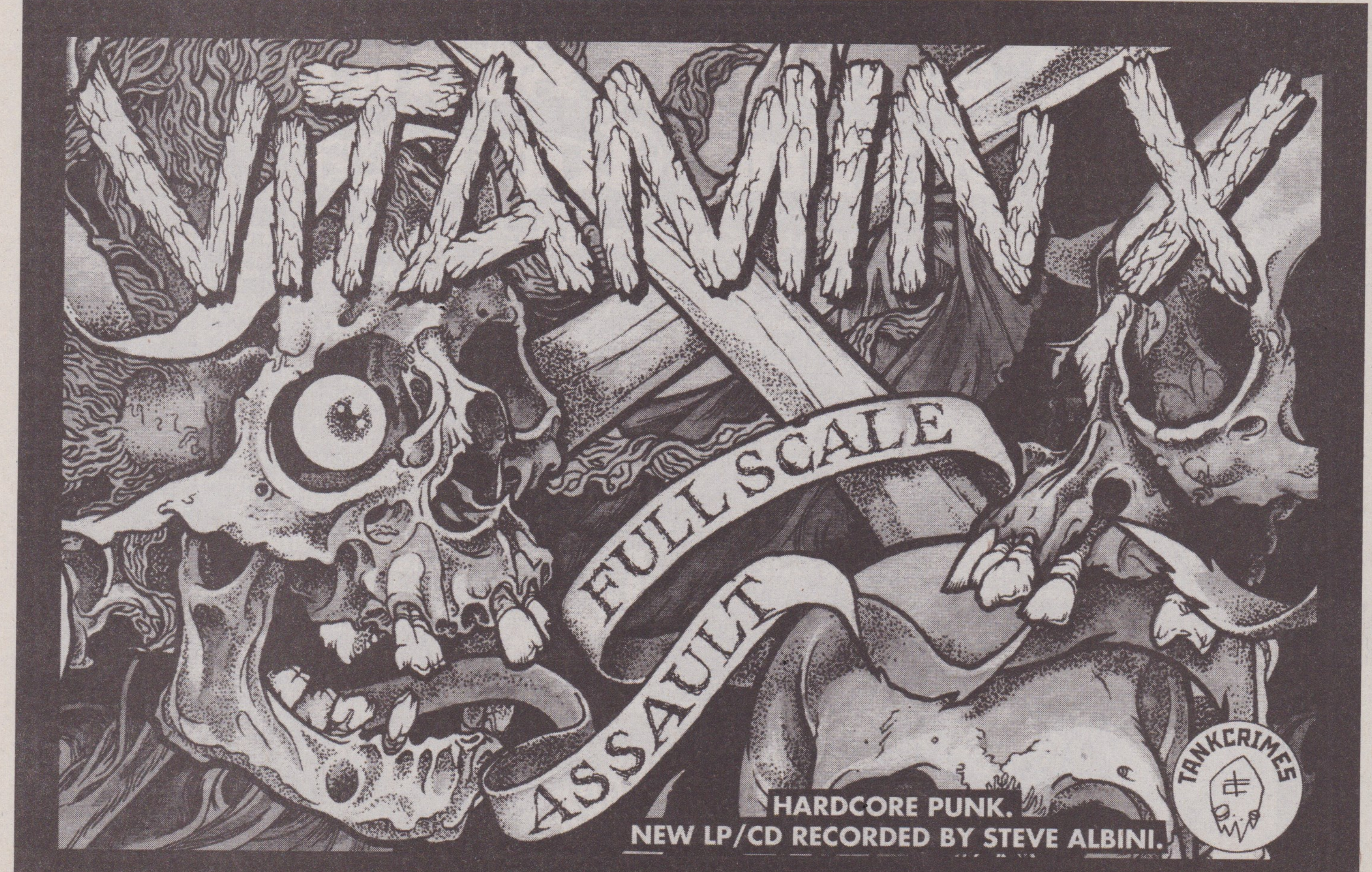

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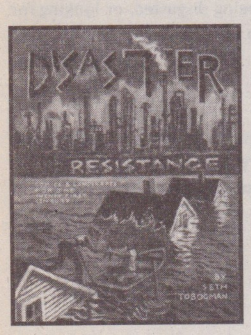


Disaster and Resistance
Seth Tobocman
200 pages • $20
AK Press
www.akpress.org

In his third book, Seth Tobocman, delivers an inspiring call to action, with his trademark bold black and white graphic comic-style narratives, poster and agit-prop reprints and a sprinkling of full-color treats. This is a five-part collection of pieces on domestic and international social and political struggles from the first decade of the twenty-first century—the Anti-globalization Movement, (dubbed here "The New Sixties"), 9-11 Armageddon, No Blood for Oil, The Not-So-Holy Land, and After the Flood.

Seth's art-journalism captures the unique perspective allowed only to a firsthand witness; Seth was there for all of the events he depicts in this book. The view the reader sees is the same one this artist-activist insider sees. This perspective gives weight to Seth's assertion that this decade is the most traumatic decade since the 1970s.

In the book's introduction, Mumia Abu Jamal writes, "...he has created a frontal response to the massive social, class, and racial crime that may be encapsulated in the term 'Hurricane Katrina.' He has crafted a clever and engaging work on the evils of the Iraq War. And he has attacked the silences around the Israeli occupation and the apartheid wall now surrounding Palestinian lands."

Disaster and Resistance: Comics and Landscapes for the Twenty First Century is a quick, yet powerful and inspirational read. While the bold black and white graphic comic-style is appealing and engaging, the three full color sections are pure eye candy, utilizing different styles and techniques.

A while back, Seth's work was deemed too radical for the pages of the *New York Times.* Here, in this well-crafted skewering of the people and institutions responsible for fucking shit up across the globe today, just as in his previous two now-classic works *You Don't Have to Fuck People Over to Survive* and *War in the Neighborhood*, Seth's work is so dangerously radical because it gets to the root, revealing the truth and strength of the struggle for social justice. And in doing so, he takes on the powers that be.

This book is definitely more than art for art's sake. And the hour-long, live multi-media presentation of this new book that Seth has been taking on the road, along with drummer Eric Blitz and guitarist Steve Wishnia, ain't bad either.

—Jessica Mills

LET FREEDOM RING
Edited by Matt Meyer

Let Freedom Ring
Edited by Matt Meyer
877 Pages • $37.95
PM Press
www.pmpress.org

"Do you know who came before you?" Ashanti Alston asks in the final essay of this behemoth on post-1960s US political prisoners. In this broad anthology, Matt Meyer collected together an array of conference documents, first person narratives, poetry, essays, and interviews from, and about political prisoners in the US In reply to Ashanti, I will go out on a limb and say that if you make it through the book to his final essay, then you will at least have a better idea about the history of US social movements surrounding political prisoners.

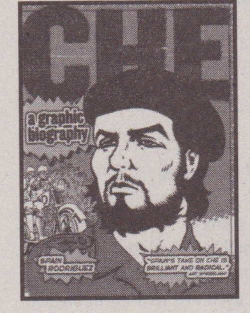
When I told one of my conservative roommates, who interns at a human 'freedom' rights policy NGO in DC, that I was reviewing a book on US political prisoners, he scoffed. He associates political prisoners with dissident journalists and librarians in former East European countries, China, and Cuba, which tend to be the center ground for many activist-liberals in the United States. Before reading this book, his denial had me flustered. In retort, I spouted off to him some of the better-known political prisoners in recent US history. "What about Leonard Peltier, Mumia Abu-Jamal, or Assata Shakur?" I asked. He thought they were more or less terrorists—end of conversation.

The conversation continued, however, through these readings. One of the main focuses of these essays is to provide a broad base from which we can legally define what a political prisoner is. This can be a really dry task for anarchists who find legal logic and definitions oppressively boring, but, as we are having a discussion about people put into prison through actual legal oppression, this is a step anyone interested in having a conversation about political prisoners in the US must have. To explain that there are political prisoners in the US, we have to be able to explain what a political prisoner is with a certain amount of confidence in our legal definitions, from sources people generally view as legitimate, for example, the international law or tribunals headed by legal scholars and ethicists that Meyer's book collects.

After we have these definitions, we get to actual cases, which are sad, but also honestly exciting. Pardon my romanticism, but it is hard not to think Plowshares activists jack-hammering the top of a nuclear missile silo into decommission aren't rad. That each of them served eight to eighteen years of prison time is both obscene and tragic. Among the other cases represented, we see selections on the American Indian Movement, Queer political prisoners along with Black Liberationists. There are pieces on prisoners from Puerto Rico Liberation movements—Puerto Rico being an often forgotten US colonial hangover that even my roommate had to recognize as problematic at best, environmental and animal liberation activists, and, a bit random for the book's organization, but an important inclusion, Critical Resistance's movement for prison abolition.

With all of this praise of the work's potential usefulness, I think it is important to pass along the editor's warning that it is meant to be a resource guide, in other words more encyclopedia-like than cover to cover reading material. The other tip-off the editor gives us is that the book was thrown together rather quickly, which shows in the repetitiveness among some of the entries. If you are looking for ragingly beautiful prose by political prisoners in the US, there are better collections out there, but if you are in search of a resource that will give you the background to argue the case for political prisoners in the US, this is your book.

—Zane Grant



CHE: A Graphic Biography
Spain Rodriguez
120 pages • $17
Verso Books
www.versobooks.com

Spain Rodriguez is a radical-comic-artist-turned-radical-historian in his latest book, *CHE: A Graphic Biography.* Manuel "Spain" Rodriguez teamed up with author and lecturer Paul Buhle to illustrate the life and adventures of Ernesto "Che" Guevara in this entertaining and painstaking comic work. Spain, the legendary underground comic artist, is a logical candidate for this project, as his history is rooted in radical political comics. Graphically, the first artist I thought of while viewing Rodriguez's work was R. Crumb. Another logical connection: R. Crumb was the founding member of Zap Comix, and a fellow founder of the underground comics movement of the 1960's, both of which Spain was also an integral part.

As a biography, *CHE* is really exciting, as not only does the reader get an in-depth look at Latin American politics and insurgency, but a thrilling illustration of the unique and tumultuous life of Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Paul Buhle is a frequent collaborator with graphic artists in similar historical pieces (*Dangerous Woman: The Graphic Biography of Emma Goldman*, with Sharon Rudahl and *Alice Wexler; Wobblies!: A Graphic History of the Industrial Workers of the World* with Nicole Schulman; and *Students for a Democratic Society: A Graphic History* with Harvey Pekar and Gary Dumm, to name a few). His contribution is welcome, as *CHE* serves as both an intimate portrait of what shaped Che Guevara into the rebel icon he would become, as well as a bit of a primer on the unrest in Latin America at that time. The reader follows Che through his motorcycle journey with friend Alberto Granado, made famous by *The Motorcycle Diaries*, through countless rebel attacks as comrade and commander under Fidel Castro, and Che's rise as a Cuban leader.

CHE: A Graphic Biography strikes me as a great resource for folks who are familiar with Che as an icon, but are not familiar with his history in the Latin American Marxist movement. While the narrative of Che's life is speckled with a plethora of well-researched details, the reader cannot help but engage with both the textual and visual material. The life of Che, and the happenings of Latin American politics in his time, is undoubtedly captivating. Both intriguing and informative, *CHE: A Graphic Biography* is a unique and entertaining approach to Che Guevara's prominent legacy.

—Kate Wadkins

TEACHING REBELLION
Stories from the Grassroots Mobilization in Oaxaca

Teaching Rebellion: Stories from the Grassroots Mobilization in Oaxaca

Edited by Diana Denham and the C.A.S.A. Collective
384 pages • $21.99
PM Press
www.pmpress.org

Teaching Rebellion chronicles the popular uprising of 2006 in Oaxaca, Mexico that started as a teacher's strike, and became a dynamic and diverse movement in which hundreds of thousands of people protested social inequity and government repression. This book is an oral history of that movement, with firsthand accounts from a wide variety of participants, including teachers, students, housewives, indigenous activists and political organizers, journalists, artists, children, and more. The heart of this book lies in the diversity of voices included and in the personal accounts of the experience, which convey so much more meaning and provide a much richer context than the mainstream media could ever hope to do.

What is so inspiring about these stories is that they are examples of a movement that not only decries state corruption and violence, but also implements direct democracy and compassionate mutual aid. Radical politics are often perceived as being a laundry list of complaints, with no answers, but it's clear that the grassroots movement in Oaxaca is rich with examples of alternative ways of organizing, and living, that emphasize participation. The really great thing about the way this book has been compiled is that the editors do not claim to speak for the people of Oaxaca, with it's wide variety of perspectives and participants and the inherent contradictions that involves. Instead, the voices of those featured give a multi-faceted view of the movement, with much food for thought. The accounts of the events in Oaxaca are by turns inspiring, heartbreaking, illuminating, frightening, and thought provoking.

If this isn't enough, the editors have also included abundant and spectacular photographs and artwork, a comprehensive introduction and conclusion which provide valuable context of the rebellion, a glossary with a list of acronyms of political organizations, and a study guide, which is a really nice touch. *Teaching Rebellion* is an inspiring and thought provoking collection, well worth the read.

—Tress

Ivan Brun
NO COMMENT

No Comment

Ivan Brun
88 Pages • 13.90 Euros
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Wholly crap, what the fuck is going on here? No Comment is a bizarre and twisted graphic novel out of France steeped in futility, and a bizarre obsession with graphic filth. The few words that are used are written in English, so there's no need to speak French, but each strip needs no words to communicate its bleak and seedy view of civilized life. The book is comprised of a few dozen short stories that would make the bastard child of Derrick Jensen and Charles Bukowski proud. There are almost one hundred pages of full color, illustrated parables that will make you want to destroy civilization, become a complete nihilist or maybe something worse.

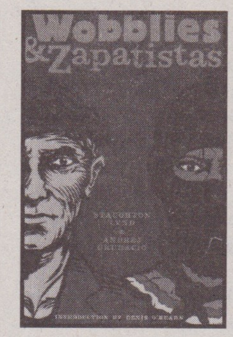
As I said before, the few words that are written in this graphic novel are in English but most communication between the author and the reader is done through striking, in-your-face, illustrations that speak for themselves, or through thought bubbles filled with symbolic images.

I'm assuming the title *No Comment* is a joke because it's clear that Brun has a comment on almost every aspect of life. If I can be so brash to sum up his comment, Brun believes, "everything is fucked and everyone sucks." Each story tells of a disturbing element of the worst of humanity. From the boss who gives pep-rallies to his co-workers after raping a cleaning lady to the government Mafiosos who steal a grandma's sauce recipe at gun-point, Brun feeds you one rank tablespoon of vinegar after another. While each of these stories is told in a page or two, they all seem interwoven into a giant doomed tapestry of a world civilization, from the highest ranking authority to the lowest of social outcasts, that is hell bent on sexualized violence, greed and self destruction.

In Brun's defense, I'm sure he would argue that to criticize No Comment is to shoot the messenger. Maybe, if it doesn't shock you, then it isn't art.

I warn anyone who does decide to delve into this illustrated underbelly of our depraved world that there are a couple graphic "sex" scenes, a few rape scenes, and enough brain splattering, intestine out-pouring clips to rival anything Cormac McCarthy has ever had a wet dream about. If you're interested in being disgusted, or looking for a reason to be outraged then check out what Brun has to say, but Caveat Emptor.

—Lowell Fletcher



Wobblies & Zapatistas:: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism and Radical History

Staughton Lynd & Andrej Grubacic, with an Introduction by Denis O'Hearn
261 pages $20.00
PM Press
P.O. Box 23912
Oakland, CA 94523

The project of this book is an admittedly exciting one: a conversation, free-flowing but ultimately cohesive, between Staughton Lynd, celebrated anti-racism and labor activist, and Andrej Grubacic, prominent thinker of the new global left. Truthfully, to call the book a 'conversation' might be a bit generous, as it is Lynd who does most of the talking, but Grubacic expertly guides the discourse. And really, Lynd's voice is all that is needed to suck you in: he narrates his intellectual and political life in a refreshingly matter of fact style, unafraid to both liberally quote Hegel and Marx as well as needle professional academics for their political quietism. His concerns, as he sees them, are the people's, and one cannot help but follow him as he takes us from his earliest childhood flirtations with socialism through his SNCC organizing in the sixties and up into his recent time spent in Chiapas. The man has lived the most important struggles of the twentieth century, and his command of both institutional analysis and on the ground anecdote constellates for the reader a sort of covert history of our own present, centered on actions that dared to imagine the possibility of another world.

As is more or less clear from the title alone, the dialogue is primarily an effort to draw together the fruitful traditions of anarchism and Marxism, showing where they have met in the past (in groups like the Industrial Workers of the World, the titular 'Wobblies') and where they might in the future. As Denis O'Hearn puts it in his introduction, "We need Marxism to understand the structure of society and anarchism to prefigure or anticipate a new society." That's an insight that seems intuitive but, in practice, tends not to manifest itself that often, and it speaks to the importance of a book like this to continually prod us towards such work.

While the success of the authors' own contributions to such a synthesis may depend on the reader's own proclivities, for my money there are at least two equally important and more successful syntheses at work in the subtext. The first would be between labor organizing strategy and the contemporary global 'movement of movements.' Lynd has particularly scathing words for what he calls 'weekend activists' who invest their energies in, say, staging a carnival to try to disrupt the yearly G8 (wait, it's G7 again, right?) meetings, and yet neglect the very real problems occurring in their own communities. Lynd himself provides numerous models for such work, having assisted local unions in legal proceedings and organized death row inmates, showing us the ways that Marxist analysis and an anarchist vision might be enacted on the local level.

The second synthetic thread I see here (and a personal hobby horse of mine, I admit) is between those 'Seattle' types, among whom most of the punx would perhaps count themselves, and liberation theology. Punks can tend to take the (occasionally well thought out, but more often woefully knee-jerk) "Fuck religion!" attitude, ignoring the innovative and brilliant work done by people of deep religious AND political conviction. Again, Lynd gives this point a serious treatment, drawing out the parallels of Zapatista actions and the teachings of radical preachers, and it's something American leftists, especially the punx, could stand to think through more seriously.

For, indeed, what we're really attempting to do in all this talk of "synthesis" is develop strategies and tactics that *work*. This readable, accessible, and yet intensely engaged and serious-minded book reminds us that the tools are, in many cases, already laid out in front of us, if we care to find them.

—Max Tremblay

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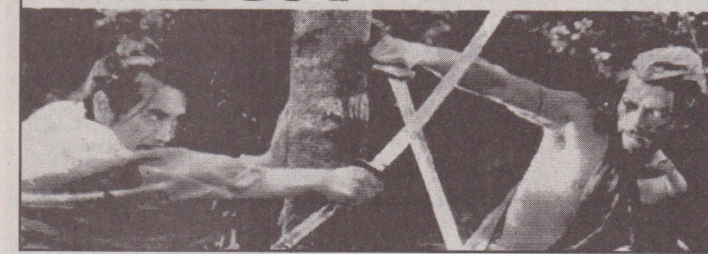
BY STEVEN SPINALI



With **Patti Smith: Dream of Life**, director Steven Sebring has wrought a labor of love. Eleven years in the making, employing a variety of exclusive material, this documentary is less a life's story than almost a poetic rendering of sound into images. Ambitious as it may seem, Sebring almost carries it off; your satisfaction with the final result will most likely depend on how as a fan you are able to re-cast your preconceptions on the singer and her work. In this case, it may take some doing.

Apparently, Smith was rather taken aback when Sebring suggested the notion of being filmed for a documentary. In fact, hard to believe as it is, apparently no one had even brought up the subject to her, despite her considerable prominence. After gaining her trust, which took some time, Sebring followed Smith as she toured globally, catching snippets of her live performances on 16mm – and rare views of her daily existence. She was, and probably still is, extremely guarded about her personal privacy.

From her earliest career, when some affectionately dubbed her "the godmother of punk," even her most devoted fans realized that the label was only partially accurate. In the mid-'70s, "punk" was still a vague term for many. In truth, her music was an amalgam of genres, offering a sound that combined poetry, art rock, and punk to create a style completely divorced from most modern music (then or now). The "punk" label comes from a palpable anger that appears in a small selection of songs, combined with a live act that's often raw and immediate.

Director Sebring has an exceptional visual sense, and it's obvious in nearly every scene. Some of the sequences seem trivial (and Smith mentions this at least twice); but the documentary gains value in the most unexpected places. The director spends an inordinate amount of time in intimate space, and there's working class informality in many scenes.

Patti Smith: Dream of Life has an almost informal feel, flipping back and forth between modern-day interviews and a variety of historical footage, which become more expertly filmed as the documentary progresses. Sebring apparently wanted to give the viewer a chance to see life from Patti Smith's point of view, as if the narrative were unfolding in her mind. As a result, viewing the final work can be demanding at times, even frustrating. An artist's life is not as glamorous as it's hyped up to be, and there's a decided ordinariness to many sequences.

The problem with Sebring's film mostly involves timing. Few would deny that Smith's career peaked with her first stable line-up, which was responsible for producing her first four albums (concluding with the *Wave* LP). Smith's career had a hiatus of several years after she had a child, but later began again with a somewhat different line-up – and a softened instrumental sound. It's more difficult to attach musical interest to her later effort; the excitement seems to have drained away. It's unfortunate that Sebring focuses his camera on this least vital section of Patti Smith's work, reducing it to a kind of prologue. (In reality, Sebring met Smith for the first time in 1995, and he'd missed the chance to document any of her early career. Nor does he seem particularly bothered by this, as if being privy to her later life was enough for him).

Patti Smith: Dream of Life is not, strictly speaking, a traditional documentary – the kind that might provide an historical view of an artist, in the context of their life and work. Filmed almost entirely in black and white, Sebring's film is more a story of an artist negotiating their mid-life issues. It's also a considerable labor of love, at one point causing him to accumulate nearly $100,000 in credit card debt (by Sebring's admission). The director admits that he was trying to make a departure from the standard "talking heads" biopic, where you learn about the artist in a logical, linear narrative. **Dream of Life** is almost the opposite, a stream-of-consciousness story that trips from one decade to the next as quickly as a thought, the story itself hinging on chance recollections. This is, according to the director, close to the way Patti Smith is said to view her life. Or at least that's the general idea.

You have to admire the austere artistic vision of the film. At the same time, it's hard to deny that the live concert excerpts lack charisma, and the editing can be fairly rough. Despite eleven years of filming, even a few of the more compelling sequences come off as half-baked. Patti Smith may be the godmother of punk, but the viewer will find himself wanting better evidence. The interview sequences are particularly dull, with the conversation drifting from one subject to the next. One exception is when Smith effuses over her guitar; merely touching it makes her beam.

Smith has an almost ageless quality in most scenes, a fact that's assisted by the more recent black and white footage. When she takes the stage for a reading, it seems more like an incantation. Here, the film almost accidentally captures one of Smith's most winning qualities – her ability to rally an audience even at a poetry recitation. Suddenly, the film bristles with excitement; you wish these sections could last longer, or show more filmmaking authority.

True, some segments are exciting, others not – but it's probably intentional. The apparent subtext of **Dream of Life** is honesty. The present moment is what it is, not glamorized with snappy editing or special effects. Unlike what you'd except from a typical rock 'n' roll film, the emotional pitch avoids humor or memorable anecdotes. Patti does admit that her relationship with Fred "Sonic" Smith was the most important in her life, and that premature death the worst tragedy. But the supposed glamour of a rock icon dissolves before your eyes as you discover a simple, ordinary woman going through life the best she can. Sebring tries to present a vision of Patti Smith that's plain and unadulterated.

Patti Smith: Dream of Life is decidedly uncommercial, and probably won't reduce the premium on Sebring's credit debt. Judging from his reactions, that doesn't matter much. A gifted professional photographer, Sebring tries to capture Smith's more intimate moments. The scenes where Smith and her son spend time together may be the emotional core of the film. These segments are too short, however, and leave you to aching for something more substantial.

In 2007, you may have had a chance to catch the one-hour documentary, **Patti Smith Under Review**, which contains all sorts of exclusive interviews and live footage. Mostly, however, it's a History Channel-style biopic that contains less material than the average fan will demand. This is the kind of "talking heads" documentary that Sebring would probably find superficial and less than artful. At least Sebring tried to maintain an intimacy with his subject.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

THE WORLD WE SEE IS THE WORLD WE'VE BEEN CONDITIONED TO SEE

I live in the Bay Area, so of course I had to go see **Milk**. I made sure to see it at the Castro Theatre which is featured prominently in the movie as a backdrop. I lived around the corner from the theater for eleven years before some greedy landlord forced me out of my home. I have seen the neighborhood change dramatically in the time I was there, and seeing its '70s representation on screen is strangely compelling. When **Milk** was being filmed on location, I walked down Castro Street late one night, looking into the redecorated window fronts of San Francisco past. It was wild.

Harvey Milk was a closeted New Yorker who decided to leave his corporate life behind and move with his boyfriend to San Francisco. While in SF, he opens a camera shop that becomes a hang out for some of the neighborhood men. After witnessing the indifference of the police toward gay victims of crime, and unnecessary raids on gay bars, Milk and his friends start to get political. This combined with the crusade of Christian singer Anita Bryant to repeal anti-discriminatory protection for homosexuals, enables their activism to gain momentum. Milk is a charismatic leader who constantly bridged the connections between different types of people. His organizational skills helped the teamsters in their boycott of Coors beer and in return the teamsters started hiring gay truck drivers. The only one he couldn't seem to work with was his fellow Supervisor Dan White.

Milk deftly combines actual footage of events with the recreation of the same events. While the tragic story of the assassination of Milk and San Francisco's Mayor Moscone is given little attention, it is the seemingly less dramatic, but in 2008 much more relevant story of Prop 6 which really sticks in the mind. Prop 6 was a California ballot initiative to ban gays and lesbians from working in public schools. The community got organized and defeated the measure. Surprisingly, former California Governor Ronald Reagan and current President Jimmy Carter both spoke out against the proposition. Reagan's opposition is most surprising, because Reagan was planning on running for president at the time. It shocks me that over 30 years later people have regressed in their attitudes. This past election season even Barack Obama would not, or could not speak out against a California state constitutional amendment to make gay marriage illegal.

Though **Milk** is a very moving and inspiring story, it does fall into the usual trappings of your typical Hollywood film. This is especially apparent in the scene where Dan White shoots Milk in his office. Milk gazes out of his window at the opera house, where the night before he attended the performance. It is a little too much for my usually accepting attitude toward the use of dramatics in films. I would recommend checking out the equally fascinating documentary about Milk, **The Times Of Harvey Milk.**

Watching **Gonzo: The Life and Death of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson**, it strikes me how completely strange it is that Thompson was a political writer who was treated like a celebrity. Would that, or could that even happen today? Sure, Thompson drank, took drugs, was irreverent and wrote for *Rolling Stone*, but he wrote about politics and people worshipped him for it. He gave a boost to the McGovern campaign in 1972, helping get McGovern the democratic nomination. Nixon ended up winning, but we all know how that turned out. Then he wrote about hearing Jimmy Carter speak to a group of lawyers and judges in 1974, calling in them on their lack of ethics and quoting Bob Dylan. Thompson was blown away and went to the car to get his tape recorder to record the speech. The film even asserts that Thompson's writings about Carter in *Rolling Stone* helped get Carter elected in 1976. I can't even imagine a writer having that much power, never mind integrity to do that today. The closest we come is Fox News. But intelligence and honesty is hardly what we expect from Fox News.

Gonzo: The Life and Death of Dr. Hunter S. Thompson focuses mostly on the early career of Thompson. It is an in-depth look at his life, from his time as a small time reporter onwards, as he becomes the Gonzo journalist most people are familiar with. In the later years he wrote for sports magazines, which are presumably not as glamorous as taking drugs and getting beat up by the Hell's Angels. Therefore the focus is not surprisingly on the former years.

Although I was a kid in the '70s and therefore don't have much memory of such things, this month's collection of films portrays a very different perception of news and politics than we have been inundated with in the United States this past year. A perfect example is **The Angry Brigade**, a BBC documentary from 1973 which was shown following the trial of the Stoke Newington 8, a group of anarchists on trial for various bombings in London. The documentary inquires into the formation of the Angry Brigade as the Stoke Newington 8 referred to themselves through a very thorough look at Anarchism from Spain during the time of Franco as it spreads to Europe and England. The approach is refreshing as well as disconcerting in the days of the twenty-four hour news channels and the scare tactics they employ.

The Angry Brigade presents a very balanced look at the structure, networking and reasoning behind the group. Although it never condones the actions the bombings, it comes at the situation from a sense of wanting to understand the motives. People are interviewed from both sides of the story. Particularly fascinating in an odd way, is a reenactment of how Hillary Creek, a member of the Angry Brigade, managed to get explosives from France into England. The events are reported in an almost conspiratorial way. I could imagine someone who saw documentary then, or even now becoming interested in the ideas of anarchism.

Also included on the DVD of **The Angry Brigade** is a shorter documentary about a similar anarchistic trial from 1979 **The Persons Unknown**. Unlike the Stoke Newington 8, all of the defendants in the Persons Unknown trial were eventually acquitted of all charges. **The Persons Unknown** also contains the only filmed footage of Crass playing live, at a benefit for the defendants. (www.pmpress.org)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, PO Box 460402, San Francisco, CA 94146-0402. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area, let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. www.carolynkeddy.com

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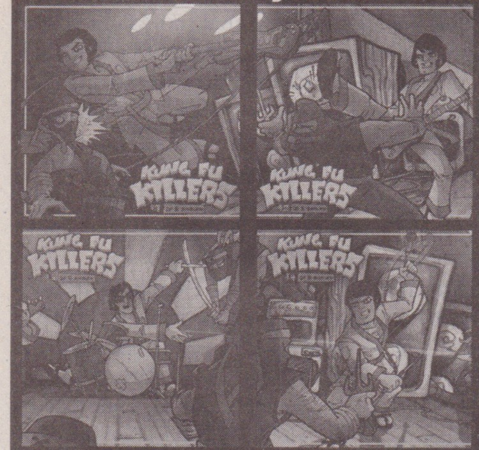

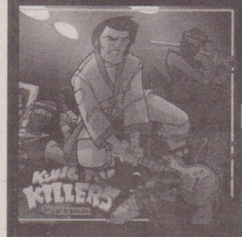

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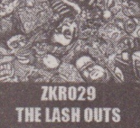

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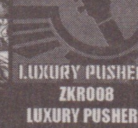

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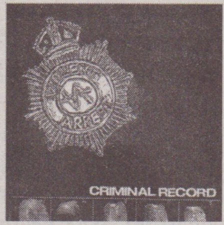

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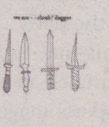
20 : UNSEEN FORCE "IN SEARCH OF THE TRUTH" CD



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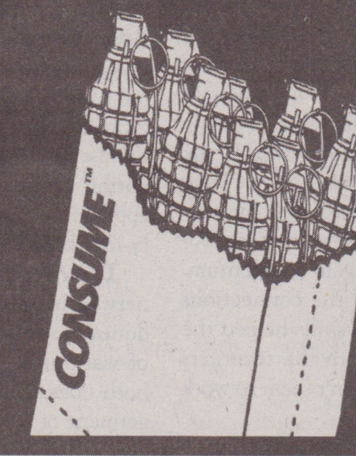

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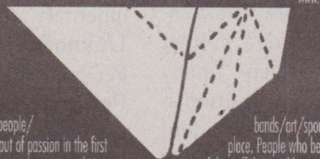

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PRINTING AND REPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT RECORD LABELS AND BANDS SINCE 1994

RECORDS

Send two copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the vinyl) to **MRR, PO Box 460760, SF, CA 94146, USA.**
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999 – "Death in Soho" LP

Wow! I knew that these guys still played shows regularly, but I had no idea that they were still writing new material rather than surviving off of all the old hits like so many of the other classic bands from the first and second waves of punk. However, as much as it's really admirable that 999 is writing new material and as much as I want to like it, it's just not the same. All the songs are really good and have 999's distinct sound, but I don't think that any of these songs are gonna stick in my head like "Homicide" or "Feelin' Alright With The Crew." However, I bet if they had released this album 20+ years ago it would be regarded as an iconic punk record and a couple of these songs would be classics today! If you're a fan of 999, I'd say that you should definitely check this out. (ML)
(Papagajuv Hlasatel)

THE ACCELERATORS / ZATOPEKS – split EP

This is an odd pairing—THE ACCELERATORS from Holland and ZATOPEKS from the UK. I say odd because the former band is a straight-ahead punk rock band and the latter band is, well, really different from THE ACCELERATORS… Regardless of that, both bands are good and my preference leans towards listening to the SCREECHING WEASEL/NOFX-influenced punk rock of THE ACCELERATORS repeatedly rather than flipping the record over. But in all fairness, ZATOPEKS are just as good. They play more pop punk that at times sounds like a punked-up version of THE JAM to me—but I think that's mostly just the English accent… (ML)
(Squinty Joe)

AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE / EXTORTION – split EP

While I feel EXTORTION's *Sick* LP is assured a spot on my Year-End Top Ten, these tracks fall a little flat on my ears. It's still hundred-mile-per-hour dastardly ripping hardcore, entrenched in the powerviolence style, but there isn't as much personality as *Sick*. It's more straightforward. The same can actually be said for AGENTS OF ABHORRENCE's side. While their *earth.water.sun* album was a highlight and an interesting take on modern grindcore, these tracks just don't hold my attention as well. Both bands here bring it, for sure, but not as hard as they have in the past. Still, a worthy purchase. (JU)
(Deep Six)

A.H. KRAKEN – "Gianna Michaels/Je Suis Ton Merecage"

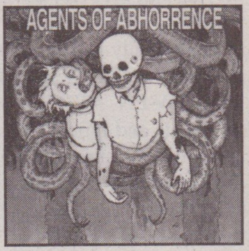
Something about this makes me imagine dudes in combat boots and floor-length leather trench coats who've read and learned a lot from Goebbel's autobiography. It's French obliteration music that sounds equally influenced by BIRTHDAY PARTY, FLIPPER, and something that Load Records woulda put out in the early '00s. The sound is total and all-encompassing—a million guitar parts drilling in on propulsive drums and headachey bass, with a singer that sounds like one of the nihilists from *The Big Lebowski*. (LG)
(Sweet Rot)

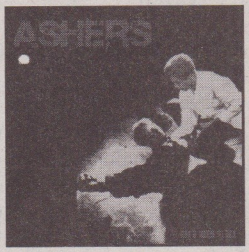
THE AMERICANS – "The Devouring" CD

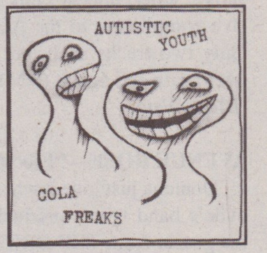
Rampaging dark hardcore from San Diego. This is the second full-length disc from THE AMERICANS, but my first exposure to the band. Total '90s "west of the Rockies" crust influences everywhere, generous nods to an era when bands like OJOROJO, RUINACRE, LOGICAL NONSENSE, and EL DOPA were the bearers of the torch. Update those comparisons a decade, and you can put THE AMERICANS in league with current rockers JESUSFUCKINGCHRIST, BORN/DEAD, or BEHIND ENEMY LINES. There's a good mix of steady, full-speed-ahead punkcrust and more mid-tempo meandering melodies, all of it driven by gruff vocals and filthy guitars that saturate the whole mix. Every three tunes or so, the listener (in this case, me) gets treated to quiet acoustic intros and/or outros, most successfully with "Darkness of Days," the best song on the disc for my money. This is a release that would have surely slipped way under my radar (CD-only, run-of-the-mill cover art, mountains of mediocre records released every month, and the excuses go on…), but I'm glad this one made it my way. (WN)
(self-released)

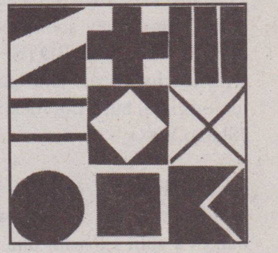
ASBESTOSDEATH – "Dejection/Unclean" CD

For those unfamiliar with ASBESTOSDEATH, members of the San Jose band went on to such heavyweights as OM, HIGH ON FIRE, NOOTHGRUSH, and SLEEP; essentially, ASBESTOSDEATH straight-up turned into SLEEP when Tom Choi took off to form NOOTHGRUSH. As one would expect, ASBESTOSDEATH also played in the slow, doomy, plodding style, but with less blatant SABBATH-ian jams. Their sound is more raw and "crusty" than what came later—in other words, most similar to NOOTHGRUSH's. This CD contains ASBESTOSDEATH's whopping four-song discography: the self-released *Unclean* 7" and the *Dejection* 7" released on Profane Existence, both from 1990. If you are into the bands mentioned here, it is definitely worth your time to look into this. (JU)
(Southern Lord)









BLACK TIME
doomsday parade
jcu · corpse life

ASHERS – "Cold Dark Place" CD

A new band featuring Mark Civitarese from THE UNSEEN, and this CD is surprisingly better than I had expected. Something about this reminds me of a faster and more rawk SUICIDE FILE. Dynamic guitar parts and screaming vocals really carry this EP, but the whole thing is steeped in a mass amount of professionalism. It's not the best thing ever, but if that comparison sounds appealing to you, this CD probably would too. (JU)
(Concrete Jungle)

ATTITUDE PROBLEM – LP

A curious band from Philadelphia, ATTITUDE PROBLEM is somewhat noise-rock and heavy, but not metal or hardcore—pummeling yet proggy. Side B adds guitar and is much more rock 'n' roll/garage rock while keeping the sounds from side A. Despite appearing to be a four-piece, it doesn't seem like they all play on every track. I didn't hear any guitar on side A—it's mostly bass and drums and there are vocals on only half the tracks. I hear a little MAN IS THE BASTARD and a little Southern hate, like BUZZOV-EN. ATTITUDE PROBLEM has similar vocals and lyrics but doesn't really sound like either of those bands. Side B has more guitar and obvious garage rock influences, but the vocals are still nasty (in a good way). I really don't know what to make of this. (MH)
(Forcefield)

AUTISTIC YOUTH / COLA FREAKS – split EP

Portland's jailbait hook-core ragers AUTISTIC YOUTH were just here on tour with DEFECT DEFECT, but unfortunately I missed them due to being in Scotland. Their atmospheric, moody anthems would have been the perfect soundtrack to the cold, grey landscape of my trip. COLA FREAKS' hyperactive, jerky, upbeat punk provides a less depressive compliment to the AUTISTIC YOUTH side. Only two tracks each, but you'll keep flipping it over again and again. (AM)
(Black Water)

AVENUE ROSE – "Electric" EP

Dontcha just love it when a band sounds like the dude's band who's producing them? In this case, the geezer from THE BRIEFS. That's cool though, I can dig THE BRIEFS' catchy '77 vibes and these young 'uns (they look about 12) have it down. Sounds like THE BOYS or early VIBRATORS with catchy vocals and buzzsaw guitars. Nothing too original, but I can rock it. (TB)
(Slab o Wax)

AVENUE ROSE / LET'S DANCE – Split EP

First off, let me just wonder why somebody makes a split EP with one side at 33 rpm and the other at 45 rpm. Okay, I won't let it bother me (anymore). AVENUE ROSE is catchy, sort of soft pop music with a dash of punk in it. They remind of THE SQUEEZE. It's the kind of thing I'd put on the record player and sort of hope that nobody walked in on me. LET'S DANCE turn up the distortion a bit, add a little growl in the vocals, and quicken the pace. This one is a mix of power-pop and traditional punk. The result is less head-swaying and more head-bouncing. Nice effort by both of these bands. It's on yellow and white splattered vinyl. (KK)
(Longshot)

BAD THOUGHTS – "Nonviolence/Night Time Is Waiting"

BAD THOUGHTS is mining the same early-'80s UK post-punk vein that I thought had been sucked completely dry by legions of American Apparel-clad bandwagon jumpers a few years ago. Now that those people have fallen by the wayside (or started SEX/VID rip-off "weird hardcore" bands), those that are left (such as BAD THOUGHTS) are free to try something interesting. A-side "Non-violence" is a scratchy little number that could have come off a BIG FLAME Peel Session, while the flip is a drawn-out psychedelic drone. Now I'm off to listen to the other stuff of theirs that came in. (AM)
(M'Lady's)

BAD THOUGHTS – "Make Yrself Necessary/ G.E.D. Defiance"

A band that has blended the darkness, tribal beat, and power of THE FALL, CRISIS, and THE MONKS. Its slight artsy feel lends weight to the brooding intensity, all driven by a punk rock ethos and energy. There's even a slight GUN CLUB feel mixed with the herk and jerk of GANG OF FOUR. I dig, I totally dig, and I wanna hear a huge platter of more. Great. (SD)
(M'Lady's)

THE BANNER – Frailty LP

Super epic, heavy mosh-core from New Jersey that sounds not unlike the folks they mention in their thank-you list—most notably MODERN LIFE IS WAR and the Deathwish label. The B-side opens with an acoustic strumming, an unmistakable nod to CONVERGE's *You Fail Me* record a few years back. This is beautifully packaged, complete with splattered vinyl, gatefold sleeve, and absolutely jaw-dropping cover art. A+ for that shit. I do find the record dragging on a bit towards the end though; it becomes a bit oppressive with its constant barrage of double kick drums and triplets on the guitar. A good release and record for fans of new East Coast hardcore. (RM)
(Ferret)

BE MY DOPPELGANGER – "Sonic Annihilation" EP

Sonic annihilation? What? I was expecting something a lot faster, louder, heavier, and definitely dirtier. The little press blurb thing that came with this record made reference to the guitar parts being "hesh enough to get the long-hairs headbangin." I thought "hesh" was a reference to metal—you know: fast, heavy, loud. Nothing about BE MY DOPPELGANGER sounds metal to me at all. To all the heshers out there—you can skip this one. The super poppy sounds of bubblegum and teenage life aren't what you're here for. Go hit your bong, drink some beer, and skate your local ramp till you forget that someone thought you'd be into this. (BD)
(It's Alive)

THE BIBLE BEATERS – "He's Always Watching" CD

Is this for real? Or is it satire?? *He's Always Watching* starts off with a woman wailing about the Lord like a Southern Baptist minister, or one of the crazy people I'd see on the NY subways sometimes. Then it kicks into a hokey song that even includes a kazoo lead?!? The liner notes in this CD profess that it is "the best gospel record ever," and it is pretty good I guess. At times it sounds like a warped JOHNNY CASH & JUNE CARTER!! Overall, the whole bible-beating shtick gets a little tiresome for a whole CD. However, it does conclude with a brilliant cover version of GG ALLIN's "Don't Talk to Me," which has been given new lyrics and the title "Jesus Talks to Me," Like I said, brilliant! And by the way, I did figure out that this is satire. I hope! (ML)
(Zodiac Killer)

BLACK TIME – "I.C.U." EP

Three more stabs in the dark from London's crown-princes of reverb. Raw and angry, with a hint of the Medway sound and a smattering of surf on one track in particular. Remember when you couldn't move for instrumental surf bands? When's that going to come back again? BLACK TIME wields their guitars like offensive weapons and given England's knife-crime hysteria I wouldn't be surprised if they end up doing time, or at least racking up a couple of ASBOs. (AM)
(Skulltones)

BLANK DOGS – "The Fields" LP

This is the sound of flying through space (although in space there would be no sound). The first track manages to bring up JOY DIVISION in my head. Overall it's somewhere between THE CURE and SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES. Even though BLANK DOGS songs always sound kind of like bummer-times, they always make me cheerful. Then again, it's not like any of the albums are screamingly different from each other, but they're is consistent, and it's good. (MM)
(Woodsist)

BLATZ / FILTH – split 2xCD

Alternative Tentacles continues to regain relevance with another good re-release. So who did *you* like better? FILTH or BLATZ? I was always more in the BLATZ camp, I have to say. Does this even need reviewing? I guess so. The soundtrack to panhandling on Telegraph Ave., Berkeley in the early '90s, it was the punkest thing on Lookout! This collects pretty much everything released by both bands, the majority of which was on the aforementioned Lookout! Records. If you've never heard 'em, FILTH were wild, and totally crusty and screechy. BLATZ were just wild and loose and nuts. A fat slice of Bay Area punk history. (AD)
(Alternative Tentacles)

BLOODY & THE TRANSFUSIONS – CD

They say that freedom isn't free. This CD is living proof of that statement. The price? Every red-blooded American has the freedom to pick up an instrument, throw a few chords together, record, and shit out their own turd of a release in the for-

mat of their choice. This is absolutely awful bar "punk" rock 'n' roll. And for good measure they threw in some country. It's absolutely dismal and mundane. When I lived in Portland, there were always bands like THE MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND and PORN STORE JANITOR that would play at whatever shitty bar. I never went to see any of them, but this is exactly what I always imagined them to sound like—shit. (SE)
(Black & Blue)

BORON AND THE GREBES – "You're a Horrible Person" EP
Freak punk from Sacramento, this is what "weird punk" should sound like, recorded on Jupiter by a Martian on his –7 track. The performers of the sound all being squirrels who ate a little bit of mushrooms—so's they're not "tripping balls" but they can't feel their legs. But shit, the whole thing was ruined because the band wrote a cute note to *MRR* inside of it that I read and then wished I hadn't. Now paranoia is creepy-crawling around my cranium and I'm wondering if these guys are affecting being "off" and I don't like it and I hate it and I like it and I coughed so hard this morning, I coughed so hard I fell over. (BB)
(self-released)

BRAIN KILLER – "Church and State" 8"+CD
This is…cryptic. On the one-sided 8", the vocalist bellows a repetitive, chant-like lyric over a minimalist dirge. Electric guitar drones and a simple drum pattern accompany. The song seems to be less influenced by post-punk than an attempt to recreate electronic noise music in an "organic" format. It's interesting, but I can't imagine listening to it on a regular basis, though it is quite hypnotic. The enclosed CD is an entirely different story. There's really no information to go on here, but the tunes are some pretty ripping distortion-drenched noisy hardcore akin to a less crusty AGHAST or the more conventional moments of the EXIT HIPPIES. Other than the vocalist, this sounds like two different bands. That being said, I would see this band live in a heartbeat in either incarnation. Track this down, if you can. (AU)
(Vinyl Rites)

BRANCH DAVIDIAN – "Party O'Clock" EP
Five tracks of hardcore with a vocalist that jumps between punk sneer and metal growls here and there. BRANCH DAVIDIAN plays pretty straightforward hardcore. Won't blow many minds, but it is what it is. (MS)
(Sick Thought, no address)

BREAD AND BOTTLE – "Long Story Short" CD
Like a bar-band take on BILLY REESE PETERS, GRABASS CHARLESTONS, and BAD RELIGION. Songs about "lying bitches" who try to "steal (your) brother." At least I'm 90% sure that's what the lyrics say—there's no lyric sheet. Awful on many levels. To call this shitty would be demeaning to my turds. (P$)
(Lucky Gator/Johann's Face)

BROWNTROUT / DRUNKEN BOAT – split EP
This is another link in the chain of great Snuffy Smiles splits featuring one band from Japan and another from America. Both bands on this record totally kick ass, but in two different ways. The DRUNKEN BOAT side was a bit surprising; it has been a while since they put out a record, and these two tracks are way darker than their previous stuff. Their older stuff had an undercurrent of pogo pop punk, and I genuinely enjoyed their music in that fashion—it was really good. And I enjoyed their side of this split, but in more of slow, head-bang kind of way. But then there's the BROWNTROUT side that brings out the pogo and crowdsurfing pop punk you expect out of Snuffy Smiles Records. It seems like the appropriate soundtrack for a drunken house party show. In this reviewer's opinion, BROWNTROUT along with GLEAM GARDEN and YOUR PEST BAND are probably the best new pop punk bands coming out of Japan right now. Totally worth checking out. (FS)
(Snuffy Smiles)

BUG CENTRAL – "Welcome to Dead Town" CD
Good old dirty British thrash punk here—metallic buzzsaw guitars and a gruff Cockney accent spitting out political hardcore tunes with a surprising amount of hooks and memorable parts. The slower songs and occasional breakdowns bring to mind STRATFORD MERCENARIES or THATCHER ON ACID—the singer sounds a lot like Ben at times. On the downside, the recording is pretty flat, and the presentation of the CD itself isn't very inspiring or exciting; I feel like the record deserved more of an effort than they've given it or something. Still, on the whole it sounds great. Can't wait to hear more. (AM)
(Bug Central)

THE BUGS – CD
QUEERS worship, anybody? From the early-era Wimpy vocals to the newer surf/pop sound, these dudes cover their bases. If that sounds enticing to you, then this is your lucky day. Maybe my sarcasm detector isn't working so well, but I had a hard time trying to figure out what's supposed to be serious and what's not. With four songs about being or wanting to be gay/lesbian/tranny, three about drugs, and the rest about such randomness as Dave Navarro's goatee and not being able to get a job, maybe you can see why. I actually laughed at how bad some of these songs were. (BD)
(Zodiac Killer)

BUKKAKE BOYS – "Splendid Thoughts" EP
Holy crap does this thing rock! I wasn't expecting such potent, frenzied hardcore judging by the cover—a cartoon-like illustration of a man eating his feet—but I'm seriously digging this right now! BUKKAKE BOYS are the sort of stuff that keeps me interested in current bands. The lyrics are angry and pessimistic, but they're not the over-the-top "I'm gonna kill myself" shit that sounds so goddamn insincere most of the time. And even better, there's no metal riffs or shouted sing-along choruses that ruin so many bands for these ears o' mine. These boys rip like current killers ACID REFLUX, AMERICAN CHEESEBURGER, or WASTED TIME. Get this. (BG)
(Danger/Vile Minds)

THE CANDY SNATCHERS – "Doin' Time/Dead Wrong"
I knew it wouldn't be long before we'd finally see some of the new songs from THE CANDY SNATCHERS, but that doesn't make it any easier for me to accept the passing of guitarist MATTHEW ODIETUS this past summer. It still breaks my heart. Seeing all these pictures of him on the cover and the record starting off with a ripping guitar riff doesn't help either. Both songs on this 7" are a bit more melodic than their usual style. It's a bit less frenetic, but the classic and inimitable CANDY SNATCHERS sound is here. "Doin' Time" is an atypical love (anti-love?) song. It doesn't sound like anyone minds being in the relationship that much; he's just stating the facts that it is a mess. "Dead Wrong" laments the changing of musical styles, but with a shrug. The scene will mutate again for better or for worse. I bet these songs would be killer to hear live. Sigh. (CK)
(Zodiac Killer)

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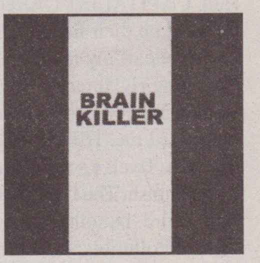


bread and bottle

DRUNKEN BOAT
BROWNTROUT

BUG CENTRAL
WELCOME TO DEAD TOWN

CAPITALIST CASUALTIES/HELLNATION – split LP

Talk about a blast from the past; I was surprised to see this on my list of items to review. CAPITALIST CASUALTIES was one of my favorites for many years but I lost track of them when it seemed the sun set on these local greats. And HELLNATION? They're still a band? So, imagine my surprise by both the review assignment and the pairing. However, no surprises from the tunes—in no way was I let down by this release. Holy. Fucking. Hell. CAPITALIST CASUALTIES sounds just like they did on their first LP, *Disassembly Line,* which is also one of my favorites of theirs. Nine tracks of punishing HC thrash with spiteful and angry lyrics; I am reminded again of why I've they've always impressed me. HELLNATION's side: again, mind = blown. Twelve songs—er, blasts—of their unique hyper-thrash. The lyrics to the song "In Ruins" are a little weird, but otherwise great, great, great! (VL)
(Sound Pollution/Six Weeks)

CIVIL VICTIM – "Mehr Krieg" EP

After one listen I could tell that this band was drawing from a broad range of hardcore influences. Sounds like VIOLENT MINDS mixed with *Feel the Darkness*-era POISON IDEA with a hint of BL'AST! Don't let this one lay by the wayside—definitely a record worth checking out. (PL)
(Loud Punk)

CLOWN ALLEY – "Circus of Chaos" CD

Another surprise assignment; had no idea there would be interest in a CLOWN ALLEY reissue. Shit, I've been passing on buying the original LP in the local bins for years. This band was a local Bay Area act in the mid-'80s and is often overshadowed by its connections: the guitarist started Alchemy Records, the label that originally released this album, as well as the second RKL LP and the first NEUROSIS and MELVINS LPs. The bassist is the daughter of screen icon Shirley Temple; she eventually played bass for THE MELVINS on a number of different albums. So, how do they stand on their own? Not bad. The album is pretty standard-fare crossover thrash for 1986: the drums are drenched in reverb and there's tons of palm-muted guitar playing. Oddly, mostly because they're seemingly from such different scenes, this album reminds me a lot of *Liberty and Justice For All* by AGNOSTIC FRONT. However, I'm sure the politics are wildly different. If crossover is your thing, I suggest checking this one out. (VL)
(Southern Lord)

COUNTRY TEASERS / EZEE TIGER – split LP

Most of the time I want people to ignore me, but once in a while I secretly wish I were truly weird. So out-there that people couldn't help but just stare at me, mouths agape. That's how I am imagining the COUNTRY TEASERS while I am listening to their records. In the flesh they may look "normal," but when you put one of their albums on the turntable you are transported to a seemingly indecipherable, exotic locale. The music puts you in a trance: the bass walking along some crooked scales, the guitar strumming along complacently, and the drums keeping in step interrupted occasionally by a cymbal crash. I am sure the lyrics are telling a very interesting story, but I can't make out the plot just yet. So I keep listening intently trying to figure it all out. I have listened to this one ten times so far and all I can figure out is that drugs are good, food and sleep are bad. There is even a tune called "Saddam Hussein" which is about a minute long and instrumental. Hmmm, that one might take a few more listens. EZEE TIGER's side is more rockin' out with loud guitars, layers of noise, and some knob-turning to make some crazy sounds. The second composition is even called "Crush Medley (A Stupid Rock Opera Kinda)." It may not be *Tommy*, but there is a carnivalistic atmosphere and an overwhelming sense that I should probably be on some kind of hallucinogen. Even though I am not, this is still a real cool time. This album is THE COUNTRY TEASERS at their best, and EZEE TIGER's more abrasive sound compliments them nicely. (CK)
(Holy Mountain)

CRIPPLE BASTARDS – "Variante Alla Morte" LP

This is the fourth full-length from this long-running (20 years) Italian grindcore band. I think CRIPPLE BASTARDS pulls everything together on this release. There seems to be more of a Swedish grindcore sound and it's more metal, but I might be hearing all of this because of the high-end production. Or maybe it's due to the fact that they recorded in Sweden? The lyrics are still serious social/political lyrics. Nice of them to include the lyrics in English, even if they are sung in Italian. The vocals are great on this record; all over the place with fewer guttural death metal sounds than on their *Desperately Insensitive* full length. They sound more like old ROTTEN SOUND or middle-era NAPALM DEATH now, but it could be that the recording isn't as raw and they've gotten tighter. The last track is slower and more discordant, which puts an exclamation point on how different each track sounds. This is one of my favorite releases of this year. (MH)
(Deep Six)

CRUDE – "Just Go Go Ahead" EP

Rules!!! This is so fucking good. I saw CRUDE a year ago and they were amazing live. This recording holds up to seeing them live. Over the top hardcore that is insane in that Japanese way that we punks over here have come to recognize and embrace. I love this. Powerful driving hardcore with enough speed hooks and touches of melody to keep the punks bouncing up and down. Great!! (MS)
(H:G Fact)

CULT RITUAL – "Haunted Ground" EP

Believe the hype—this EP proves that these guys are worth their weight *and* all the talk in the inner circles about how good they are. This is dense and difficult music, a wall of sound that threatens more than it invites. I find myself wondering when the last song stopped and the next began while straining to listen to the crazy guitar tones and distinguish between the fuzz and the vocals. Trashy drums with everything on *distort*; I'm not sure what makes all of this a song or songs, but whatever it is, it works. (RM)
(Youth Attack)

DAS KAPITAL – "Ben, We're Jealous" EP

DAS KAPITAL plays the type of pop punk that I think I've seen referred to as muscular. They're somewhere in the same area as PEGBOY—tough vocals, melodic riffs, minor chords here and there. The two songs on the A-side are fairly catchy, but the song on the B-side kinda sucks. Overall, DAS KAPITAL achieves the mark of being decent. There's nothing original or interesting about 'em, but I've heard way, *waaayyy* worse in my life. (CI)
(Johann's Face)

DEAD LUKE – "Running Scared" EP

I can't help but think of a lot of stuff of this ilk as a second-rate BLANK DOGS or SPIDER. This is different. This is next-level, potential year-end top-ten shit. Maybe Luke indulged and bought some new pedals. Whatever he did, this stuff is killer. It's the best synthy new wave punk that I've heard in a while. Can't help but compare it to the new BLANK DOGS record, which is good, but I like this better. Also like it quite a bit better than some of the NICE FACE stuff. This variation on the style is a little cleaner and synth-stoked than the dude's contemporaries. This is crucial, first rate, and unexpectedly impressive. (P$)
(Sweet Rot)

LOS DIFUNTOS – CD

From East LA, LOS DIFUNTOS seem to be a band that grew up idolizing RANCID. That's not a bad thing, necessarily, but you can tell they are still young and the influence is pretty noticeable. In addition to RANCID, I can hear some ANGEL CITY OUTCASTS meeting with an outstanding psychobilly upright bass rhythm section (think NECROMANTIX, MAD SIN, TIGER ARMY). My favorite tracks were the country-tinged "Now I'm Gone," "You Don't Know Me," and the very rockin' "Memories." Keep one eye on these guys to see how they develop. (RK)
(Nickel and Dime)

DIOS MIO – "Prey to God" EP

Fucking *rock!* Eau Claire, Wisconsin's DIOS MIO kicks out four jams of solid rock 'n' roll-influenced hardcore punk on this 7". At times it has more of a SEX/VID vibe, and it even enters into NYHC/crossover territory on "Tread the World" and "Prey to God." Really good stuff, catchy as fuck; I'd definitely see them live. Only 200 were pressed, so it might already be gone, but it's being repressed in an edition of 500 as *Shit Life* by Gnarly Slaughter Records on colored vinyl this winter, so you should be able to get your grubby little hands on one somehow. (VX)
(Wednesday Sound, no contact info)

DISGUSTER / HITCHHIKERS – split CD

This is a split CD from two really good rock 'n' roll bands! I actually forgot that this was a split when I first listened to it, but then I looked at the track listing, and the songs alternate between bands. I didn't even notice! I guess that means that DISGUSTER and HITCHHIKERS are a good fit for a

split. Both play chunky rock 'n' roll full of hooks that keeps my foot tapping to the music. This is just chaotic enough to be energetic, but not so out of control that it's spastic and loses its catchiness. It reminds me of a lot of the bands from the late '90s that were coming out on labels like Junk and Estrus such as THE WEAKLINGS or THE DRAGONS or NEW BOMB TURKS. I like it! (ML)
(Zodiac Killer)

DOGFLESH – "Vision of Hell" CD

For the spikey crew. Total UK82 EXPLOITED/ABRASIVE WHEELS style charging punk. It's good an' all, but doesn't go anywhere or have the bite that the OG bands had. Fans of Punkcore though, take note of a legit-sounding UK82 band to paint on your leather. (TB)
(Unrepentant)

DOPAMINES / TILL PLAINS – split EP

THE DOPAMINES are fast (in a mid-tempo pop-punk way, anyway) and very catchy. They have hooks up the yin-yang, gang back-ups, and a good, fresh overall feel. Super. TILL PLAINS comes off somewhat as a punk MODEST MOUSE—fine by me if it's OK with you. They of course have a more "mature' or "high-brow" approach than the DOPAMINES, who just let rip, but are no less great. I don't want to sound down on them; if you like indie pop *and* punk (as I most definitely do), then this is right up an alley very few can make work. Very good all 'round. (AD)
(Soapy Hand)

DOTS – "Smile Price Love" EP

Catchy garage-sounding punk out of Italy. It's hard to hear where they're drawing their influences from. They have that lo-fi quality sound of the In the Red Records stuff mixed with the intensity of early LA punk such as BLACK FLAG or ADOLECENTS. Not really much more to say about it except you should pick it up, then let me know where you got it! (PL)
(Ken Rock)

THE DWYERS – "Betty Sue" EP

The songs here are pretty good—nothing that stands out as amazing, but by no means stale or boring. THE DWYERS play some straightforward, catchy punk, a little poppy, nice and uptempo with little guitar riffs here and there to keep us interested. Sounds good so far, right? Herein lies the problem—the last song is called "Giggling Faggots." What the hell? I wanted to think they were using the word "faggot" the same way LIMPWRIST has that t-shirt with "Fags Hate God" in large letters, as if whoever wrote the song is gay. That doesn't seem to be the case, as one of the lines in the song points out how the singer/songwriter is not gay. I'm actually utterly confused as to what the deal is. Is it a case of wearing one's homophobia on their sleeve? Maybe he's having a hard time staying in the closet? I'll leave the deciphering of this confusion up to anyone who's willing to spend their free time with dumb bullshit like this. (BD)
(Psychedelica)

EAT AND RUN – "American Slob" EP

Holy shit!! Short, fast, snotty songs about school, parents, skating, and thrashing! Some young dudes here keeping it real and seriously *burning* through their EP like there's no time to spare. Lot's of energy, good tunes to get you pumped in the morning (only to later be defeated by the world). Don't be fooled by the dumb name and the terrible artwork; this is a good, straightforward punk record. (RM)
(Kill Shock)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN / MAXIMUM RNR – split EP

Hmmmm… I'm not familiar with their older material, but on this split ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN sounds exactly like ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT circa *RFTC*. Exactly! MAXIMUM RNR, on the other hand, plays two tracks of really bad bar rock that occasionally gets aggressive in a ZEKE way. I'll pass, wholeheartedly. (JU)
(self-released)

ENDANGERED FECES – "No. 2" CD

Vocals sound like BLINK-182. This record sounds like one of those afternoons where you and a bunch of friends have free studio time and decide make an "album"—only at a really nice studio that happens to have Don Fury as producer. The vocals sound like BLINK-182 and the lyrics sound like an afterthought. One song sounds like it could be a commercial for Jameson Whiskey. (PL)
(Overdose on Records)

EVACUATE – LP

In the tradition of Jake's Charged Records out of New Jersey, EVACUATE from San Diego offers punk rock for the young chaos punks. The guitars and vocals are adequate but you are left with a very generic product. There is nothing original or even mildly stimulating here. The vocalist works hard and the band has obviously practiced and refined their sound to the most commercial level possible. Hopefully the fans of THE VIRUS, THE CASUALTIES, and A GLOBAL THREAT will be enamored with the music offered here. Not recommended for rough and tumble hardcore punks… (BR)
(Joe Pogo)

EYES AND EARS – "Howl at the Moon/Slave Wage"

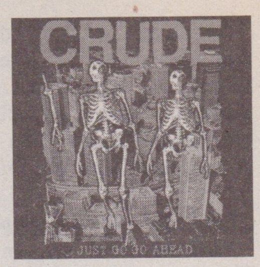
This one is pretty cool. If I'm a sucker for female vocals, I may be more of a sucker of the male/female back-and-forth vocal thing. This one is very rocking, with lots of guitar, and also very catchy, though not so much in a head-bouncy sort of way. It's more toe-tapping catchy. The difference is subtle, but it does exist. This also has certain darkness to it. It's not happy-catchy, it's eerie-catchy. Limited to 250, this one is worth looking for. (KK)
(Octopus)

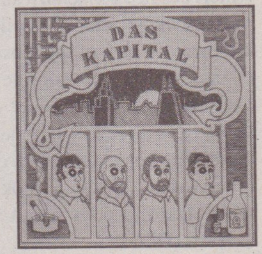
EYES AND EARS / REDDMEN – split LP

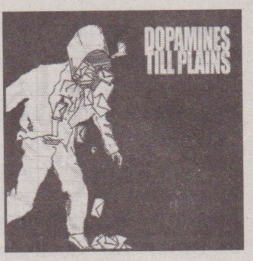
Not Bad Records has been releasing records for over a decade and has predominately focused on bands from Colorado. EYES AND EARS is a newer band from Denver but some of the members have been playing in Colorado's quasi-pop-punk scene for years. EYES AND EARS plays sloppy (not an insult) rock that is neither poppy nor anything close to abrasive. It's just good-spirited sloppy rock. THE REDDMEN are from South Dakota and do play pop punk. But it's more like power-pop-punk than the gritty but polished stuff I'm more accustomed to. It's not really my cup of tea, but if you like obscure pop punk, I think this record will stay under the radar for a long time. (MU)
(Not Bad)

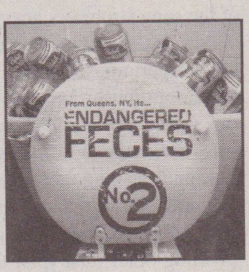
FAILURES – LP

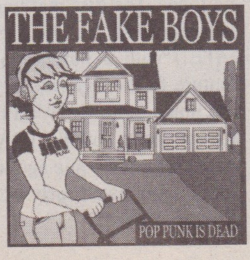
OK, I hate playing the ex-members-of game, but in this case it's relevant (or maybe I'm just a lazy reviewer). FAILURES features members of notable bands including CHARLES BRONSON, ORCHID, AMPERE, DAS OATH, CUT THE SHIT, and BUCKET FULL OF TEETH, and it shows. They play fast, abrasive, noisy hardcore in the vein of the aforementioned bands—spastic and chaotic and loud as all get-out. Brutally personal lyrics about the crushing depression of exis-











tence: "Maybe if I despised you enough, we could fuck every single day for years on end." Ouch. The first pressing of 600 is sold out from both labels; the second pressing on red is limited to 400, so buy it now or regret it later. (VX)
(Clean Plate/Youth Attack)

THE FAKE BOYS – "Pop Punk Is Dead" CD

Are they celebrating or mourning its passing? There's a cartoon of a baby-stroller-pushing suburbanite clad in a BLACK FLAG t-shirt on the cover, which doesn't especially answer the question. The music features a lot of familiar chord progressions, but there's a lack of the most overworked pop punk clichés, which is how one generally identifies latter-day pop punk. The absence of said clichés is a step in the right direction, but there isn't much replacing them. The songs tend to go in one ear and out the other without a single hook to make them memorable. The CD does sound very...uh, professional, at least. (DD)
(Cheapskate)

FINALLY PUNK – "Coffee, Tea, and Misery" EP

It's the new FINALLY PUNK! I'm excited. They always have all these sounds and phrases that barely fit, but somehow work. It all seems like it's about to fall apart constantly. They got a little less chaotic, and it's starting to seem like they are figuring out what they are doing, but it still has that total sound of doing whatever you want, however you can. This isn't as exciting or crazy as their first CD-R or seeing them live, but its still fun. (MM)
(M'Lady's)

FINAL WARNING – CD

The legendary Portland band FINAL WARNING has finally received the reissue treatment they deserve, and from a surprising label at that. This CD collets all the band's studio recordings—four tracks from their EP released by Fatal Erection Records and one song from the *Drinking is Great* comp. All are UKHC-influenced rippers, heavy on the DISCHARGE influence, though the soloing is decidedly sub-Bones quality. Of course, it's not all DISCHARGE all the time, as the vocals and some of the song structures are clearly in the CRUCIFIX mold. The photo of the singer with "Final Warning" superimposed over the classic CRUCIFIX peace sign/mushroom cloud logo on the back of his jacket was a pretty good indicator. While the liner notes make the case for FINAL WARNING being a groundbreaking crossover band, they really were only metallic in relation to the US hardcore of the time. Besides, they don't need to be acclaimed as anything other than what they were—a rock-fucking-solid hardcore punk band that broke the mold of the Portland scene and made some killer fucking tunes. The disc is rounded out by a remarkably well-recorded live set (opening for MERCYFUL FATE!) with a number of unreleased tunes that venture further into metal territory, though they're still much more VENOM than METALLICA. Pick this up, along with the DIATRIBE demo 7" reissue that came out a while ago, for an essential primer in under-appreciated early US D-beat. (AU)
(Southern Lord)

FIRST OFFENSE – "The Faith To Stand Your Ground" CD

Tough and barley street punk that has taken a few lessons from THE HUDSON FALCONS and THE GC5, to name a few. It's well played and the production spot-on; if you like this style then you'll dig this. (SD)
(Step Up)

FPO – "Ne/Znaes/Sto/E/Toa/Covek" CD

FPO stands for Forever Positively Obsessed. They are from Macedonia and play a very positive and energetic style of thrash and hardcore. Tight and enthusiastic, this is well worth checking out. (RR)
(Junk Cola, no address)

GHOST AQUARIUM – "Light Cannot Escape" EP

For those of you who wondered what would happen if someone did a semi-goth alt-rock take on DINOSAUR JR. (P$)
(Ripping)

GOOD LUCK – "Into Lake Griffy" CD

Good pop punk with heavy indie rock overtones. From Bloomington IN, this band includes members who have been in MATTY POP CHART and ONE REASON. I'm hearing ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE as well as PEE and LEMURIA. For jangly, spastic pop fans. (RL)
(Self-released)

GORE – "Hart Gore" 2xLP

This is my first exposure to GORE, a Dutch instrumental power trio that formed in the mid '80s and continued through the early '90s. The members of the band were in various early-'80s hardcore and punk bands including PANDEMONIUM. GORE formed to be an instrumental band, but oddly enough *Hart Gore* includes lyrics to go along with the music even though the songs never contained vocals. If you're like me, you tune out at the word "instrumental." It brings to mind boring wankery, tech-talk, and people that have nothing to say, but somehow GORE manages to naysay my prejudice. Of course these dudes can play—all of the members are masters of their instruments and the songs have enough movement to keep my ears at attention. The overall sound is doomy and metallic and the songs maintain a repetitious, mid-tempo, rhythm-heavy formula that is occasionally interrupted for some welcome guitar showmanship. After ten minutes of listening to *Hart Gore*, I was in a relaxed, trance-like state. This reissue comes with a bonus LP of live recordings that have a good, powerful sound and prove GORE's ability to remain interesting despite being instrumental. It's apparent that the members of the band were somewhat infatuated with the scene surrounding SST and the recent unearthing of the first two GORE LPs is perfectly timed given all the resurgent interest in mid-period SST stuff, and fans of the aforementioned or MELVINS, SWANS, etc. should seek this stuff out. (CI)
(Southern Lord)

GORE – "Mean Man's Dream" 2xLP

The second (and slightly better, in my opinion) of two deluxe GORE reissues reviewed this month. This Dutch band reminds me most of an instrumental Boner Records-era MELVINS, though at times I flash back to INFEST's "Fetch the Pliers" or "Three or Nothing." Heavy, dark, and menacing, but also with enough forward drive to maintain my interest over the course of two discs of instrumental jamming. The liner notes (sadly split between the two releases—I guess they expect you to buy both double-LPs to get all the GORE-y details) kinda make the dude come off as an arrogant prick who thought his band was the second coming, but I'll admit this record is both original *and* pretty great, and GORE probably blew their fair share of minds on a good night. The second disc here, featuring live material and a couple studio outtakes, might be a little redundant seeing as it duplicates the first disc's tracklist *exactly*, but I'm obliged to give this a pass 'cause it's so nicely assembled, complete with photos, "lyrics," and the works. I do love a good reissue package. (CS)
(Southern Lord)

HEAD HOME – "Outside My Window" LP

What we have here is unapologetic DINOSAUR JR/SUPERCHUNK worship, led by the bass player of B'more hardcores DEEP SLEEP on guitar and vocals. Simplistic, catchy rock tunes with tastefully sung vocals and those simple solos for which Mr. Mascis is known. The DINOSAUR JR comparison is totally unavoidable, but fortunately I can't simply dismiss this band as an ode given the competence and quality of the musicianship and tunes and the attitude of it all. Not really a punk record per se, but unlike most indie rock, these folks lack the feel of trying to "make it." (JU)
(Wallride)

HEARTBEEPS – "A Boring Life With No Guitar" EP

HEARTBEEPS play really cool, über-fuzzed-out rock 'n' roll! It's a little too much on the "lo-fi" side for my taste and the quality of the recording is not top-notch, *but* the quality of the songs make up for that more than enough! THE HEARTBEEPS are from France but sing in English, so some of the lyrics and vocals seem odd, but overall it all works and sounds great. This would qualify as KBD punk rock and reminds me of some of the bands that were coming out on the Rip-Off label in the '90s. And the icing on this cake is a killer cover version of "My Flash On You" by LOVE!! (ML)
(Frantic City)

HOW DARE YOU – "Comfort Road" CD

Comfort Road is full of radio-friendly melodic emo-style punk. The singer's voice reminds me a bit of the guy from FUEL. Musically these Floridians sound like a band that rented the practice space in between NEW FOUND GLORY and HOT WATER MUSIC. Not bad, just a little too soft for my tastes. Standout cuts were "My Last Stop on the T" and the ballad-like disc-closer "No Remains." (RK)
(Fail Safe)

ICON GALLERY – "Retribution" EP

OK, I must admit upfront that I was wholly un-

prepared for this. Pittsburgh political punk that has taken the drama of IRON MAIDEN-like metal and run with it. The lady vocalist is really impressive, with incredible Bruce Dickenson-esque moments. ICON GALLERY sounds like LA FRACTION or THE ASSASSINATORS got metal-ified (in the best way possible), or like a catchier late-era POST REGIMENT. It's really well played, but grounded with gritty production. Recommended. (AA)
(Dear Skull)

INTELLIGENCE – "Fido, Your Leash Is Too Long" EP

Two new tunes from INTELLIGENCE. The A-side is awesome. I had to double-check the turntable to make certain it was set to 45 rpm 'cuz it sounded like it was still on 33! Bravo! It definitely sounds slow and at the wrong speed, so it's pretty fantastic that it was intended to sound that way. On the other side of the wax, "Shitty World" provides a whole different story. It's an upbeat rockin' number and exactly what you would expect from a band that's released a few LPs on In The Red. More of the lo-fi thrash shit that people can't seem to get enough of. (MU)
(Plastic Idol)

JACUZZI BOYS – "I Fought a Crocodile/Blowin' Kisses"

JACUZZI BOYS play pleasant, jangly garage pop with some instantly catchy hooks. The vocals are very low key, seemingly close to a whisper, but the music is very upbeat. When you hear the mixture of these sounds from across the room your ears instantly perk up. What is that fabulous sound? It is a perfect combination. Plus "I Fought A Crocodile" not only sings of bike riding, but also incorporates the ringing of a bicycle bell into the song. That makes me smile. Another fabulous single from these guys. (CK)
(Rob's House)

JT IV – "Cosmic Lightning" LP+DVD

Originally released in 1987, with songs recorded between 1977-87, this reissue showcases the musical prowess of Chicago native John Timmis IV. His hit, "Waiting for the CTA," a great VELVET UNDERGROUND rip-off, kicks off this ten-track album. Most of the songs are man-and-his-guitar rockers that hit that post-KBD sound. You know, the people who were influenced by all the pre-punk bands, but headed in a more FM radio sound and kinda missed the mark, with excellent results. Think along the lines of KENNE HIGHLAND (of THE GIZMOS fame). At the same time, the second song, "Death Trip" almost brings to mind the WAX MUSEUMS in its simplistic genius. Quality packaging with well-done pasted-on front and back jacket art, and a slightly schizophrenic insert detailing JT's other artistic endeavors. Also includes a DVD, *Frankenstein on Stage* (FRANKENSTEIN being JT's pseudonym after suffering horrible burns in a car crash). (IS)
(Galactic Zoo)

KARKABA – "Beldurrik Gabe" LP

Hailing from the Basque Country, KARKABA blast out sixteen songs of full-blown-out hardcore punk. They combine the 1-2-1-2 DISORDER noise beat with the urgency of frenzied vocals in the classic Italian hardcore style. This is the sound of pulling your head out of the glue-bag long enough to take CHAOS UK off of the turntable because you need something a little more frantic like WRETCHED. The lyrics are in their native Basque dialect, and come with a Spanish translation. The entire record has a very desperate look and sound. Anyone who likes their hardcore with an unhealthy dose of spit-heaving noise will be pleased with this platter. (SE)
(No Thanks)

KID DYNAMITE – "Cheap Shots, Youth Anthems" LP

Originally released on CD in 2003 and now making its analog debut, *Cheap Shots, Youth Anthems* collects previously released "rarities" (tracks from splits, comps, etc.), unreleased demo material, and seven songs recorded live on the radio. When you figure in the colored vinyl and substantial liner notes, this is a crucial release for existing KID DYNAMITE fans. But suppose you're like me and you've never heard these Philly kids (ex-LIFETIME, pre-PAINT IT BLACK/ NONE MORE BLACK/LOVED ONES/etc.) before… Well, since I've just listened to this record, allow me to provide my interpretation: Bits of DAG NASTY, NAKED RAYGUN, JAWBREAKER, later DESCENDENTS, and a whole lot of GORILLA BISCUITS, all viewed through a '90s poppy hardcore lens. Coupla decent tracks I'd say, though I don't really like the whiny vocal style much. What kills this for me is the string of five god-awful covers of classic tunes by BLACK FLAG, CIRCLE JERKS, THE CLASH, MINOR THREAT, and DEAD KENNEDYS. It's like watching old footage from the '50s of PAT BOONE singing his whitebread version of LITTLE RICHARD's "Tutti Frutti"—completely sterile and devoid of everything that made the originals dangerous. (CS)
(Clay Street/Jade Tree)

KILLED BY THE BULL – "The Return of the Spell" EP

KILLED BY THE BULL is kind of reminding me of LOST SOUNDS meets THE MISFITS and Mike Patton for some odd reason. It has this goth/garage thing going on, but somehow the songs totally remind me of MR. BUNGLE. I'm might be way off, but this is all I've got. (RR)
(KOI)

KING KHAN – "It's a Lie/Congratulations I'm Sorry"

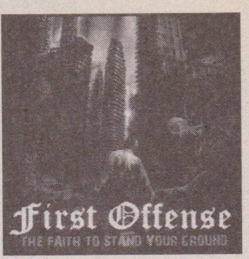
A Norton-worthy outing from Mr. KHAN, sounding totally vintage in a moody '60s garage rock kinda way, especially on "It's a Lie." If you didn't know better, you might mistake this song for a lost *Back From the Grave* gem dug up by Billy and Miriam from Norton. Or maybe even a GORIES tune lost to time. The flipside has KHAN serving up the night's slow dance song, a quiet instrumental. No real surprises here, except maybe the more mellow tone than you might expect from this madman. (IS)
(Norton)

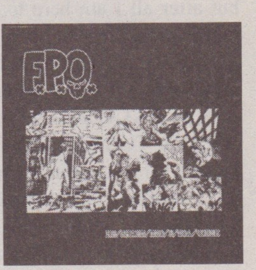
KIAS FANSURI – "Dua Tahun Pertama" CD

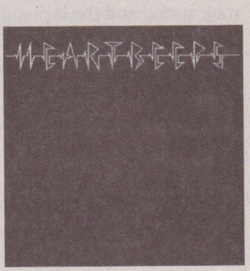
Until this moment, I never knew there was a screamo scene in Malaysia. After a bit of internet research, my ignorance has been completely exposed. Not only are there a fair amount of Malaysian screamo bands, a lot of it is quite good. Take KIAS FANSURI, for example. Featuring ex-members of UTARID (another band I was unfamiliar with until now), they play in a style that should make fans of SHIKARI, FUNERAL DINER, or NEIL PERRY feel right at home. Most of the lyrics are in English, with obscure titles such as "Would You Like to Taste My Homemade Morgue?" and "Love Lost Butterscotch," while one is in their native Malay. This CD collects their first two years of releases, including a demo tape, a comp track, a three-way split 10", a split 7" and, strangest of all, a split 3.5" *floppy disk*. Since you'd probably have a good deal of trouble tracking all of those down, just pick up this CD instead. (VX)
(Quiet. Still. Dead.)

KNIGHTS OF THE NEW CRUSADE – "A Tribute to the Pilgrims" EP

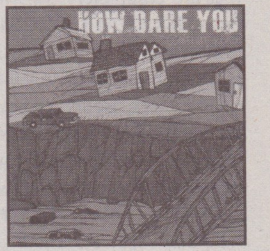
The KNIGHTS continue their crusade to convert the godless to the Way of the Lord through (garage) rock and roll. "There's Someone in Your Life," the A-side, is a heavy, fuzzed-out stomper that marches into some heavy guitar licks.

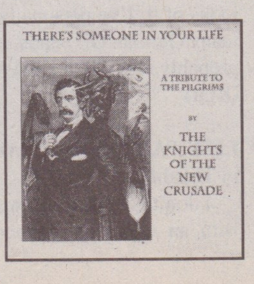






HITCHHIKERS




THERE'S SOMEONE IN YOUR LIFE
A TRIBUTE TO THE PILGRIMS
BY
THE KNIGHTS OF THE NEW CRUSADE

The B-side is a more controlled number, which reflects on how the KNIGHTS were once heathens who "Didn't Care." Follow their example and you too can be saved. Or not. (IS)
(Knights of the New Crusade)

KNUCKLE SAMICH & THE BLACK EYES – "Steel Caps & Warm Pabst" CD

Once again I've been tricked into dismissing a cool CD before even listening to it, when in truth it's pretty damn good! Not to be overly judgmental, but after all I am here to give my opinions and I gotta admit that the band name didn't get me too excited. Once I got past the first track and let my mind open up again, I really enjoyed it! The first song on this CD is the weakest that KNUCKLE SAMICH & THE BLACK EYES could have chosen to start off this rollicking rock 'n' Oi! gem. Overall, I've heard this all before, but there's a reason why clichés within certain genres work—it's cuz they're good and worth doing over and over again! KNUCKLE SAMICH & THE BLACK EYES mix it up a bit though. "Our Turn Now" has a Southern rock sound and the last song, "Fight or Fuck," starts with a bit of '50s doo-wop. All in all, these guys play good, up-tempo, contemporary Oi!/skinhead rock 'n' roll and they play it well. I bet they put on a helluva fun live show! (ML)
(BCM)

KOROVA – "Another Happy Customer" CD

Raw hardcore punk from Alabama. Noisy, sloppy, with spoken/sung/barked vocals you can clearly understand. The music is simple and has a rough recording quality, but it all sorta works. It was recorded in someone's basement. There is a nice irreverent feeling running through all the songs, but it's all too generic for me to compare to anything. The closest thing I can think of is maybe NO TREND. KOROVA isn't bad, but I didn't get into it. (MH)
(Victimized)

KRAWALL BRÜDER – "15 Years of Oi! & Violence" CD

Wow! This is what I imagine IRON MAIDEN would sound like if they played Oi! music! This CD is full of fast, chugging guitars and leads that are completely over the top. As the title suggests, KRAWALL BRÜDER has been around for quite some time and this is their fifth CD, which is a compilation taking material from their previous releases. Being a German band, all the songs are sung *auf Deutsch*. However, there are detailed liner notes in the booklet with English translations of the song titles and a short explanation of what each song is about, which is great for those of us who don't speak German. There is even a video on the CD taken at a huge festival in Europe and these guys definitely seem popular over there from the looks of it. I've personally never been a big fan of many German Oi! bands, but if you are, then you'll probably really like KRAWALL BRÜDER. (ML)
(KOI)

LIFE PARTNERS – "Aids of Spades/Teenager in Trouble"

I don't get this one. Two songs of '77-style punk with an organ and someone ranting nonsensical bullshit. The organ and dirginess of the songs make me think it's maybe the MURDER CITY DEVILS and the dude with glasses is doing his best to fuck a cat and recite his slam poetry, all at the same time. Try as they may, it doesn't really work. Plus, it's expensive as shit. (VL)
($8 PPD from Ride the Snake)

LITTLE JOHNNY AND THE SILVERTONES – "Rock 'Til the End of Time/I've Got a Woman"

Two tracks of primitive rock 'n' roll recorded way back in the glory days of '63. The type of record that had your square parents convinced that the lord high of darkness—Captain Beewellgiebubble, Lucifudge himself—was behind this new teenage fad. It's raw, it grooves, its got that dirty soul that got a whole lot of white folk into a lot of trouble. Like a stripped-down SONICS mixed with a super gnarly LITTLE RICHARD. Norton hits the bulls-eye again. (SD)
(Norton)

LOBSTER KILLED ME – "The Wind Is Mine" EP

Wow. Bless those Frenchies. Blindsided again. I mean, "LOBSTER KILLED ME"??? Really? But, books and covers and all that—this shit totally rules. Choppy guitars, anthemic, hooky songs. Imagine a way catchier MANIFESTO JUKEBOX with some HÜSKER DÜ/LEATHERFACE riffage. I'm gonna come from left field but these dudes remind of Frenchies of old, LES THUGS, who I love with a passion. It's totally refreshing amidst the dark wave and power-pop flooding the shops these days. But "LOBSTER KILLED ME"? C'mon. (TB)
(Gestalt)

LOVING THUNDER / MOUNTAIN HIGH – split EP

Weird… each of these bands traffic in a different kind of '80s M.O.R. hard rock/post-punk hybrid. LOVING THUNDER sounds like a combination of RUSH and THE CURE, while MOUNTAIN HIGH evokes a bastard offspring of VAN HALEN and KILLING JOKE. I can't decide if this is something to be encouraged, but I can't deny that the record is an intriguing listen. I'm certainly glad they found each other. (AM)
(Hot Dog City)

LUXURY PUSHERS – "Welcome to the Party, Traitor" CD

This Ohio band plays straight-up rock 'n' roll that sounds to me like it could be a huge hit on MTV2. They've got a lot of unnecessary guitar solos and the tambourine player has a pretty heavy hand. The main vocalist spits out lyrics about girls and about being a rock 'n' roller who is "just in it for the fuckin" while the back-up vocalist releases gutteral growls. This is awful. (DA)
(Zodiac Killer)

MANVILLE – "No Weak Shit" CD

MANVILLE plays fast, rocking punk with semi-screeched, sorta sung vocals. The recording on *No Weak Shit* is thin and blown-out, while the playing is a bit of a slopfest. MANVILLE is not the type of band to blow minds, but they play in a blazing, loud, and messy manner that has always defined small-town punk. Any bands hitting Boise in the coming year could probably count on MANVILLE to share the bill and put on a fun show. (CI)
(208)

THE MARKED MEN – "Fortune/Like Robots"

It's hard reviewing the best band in the world—what can you really say about a band that has everything that you ever wanted? Hooks, fist-pumping emotion, that dangerous, raw edge, double vocals that are pure perfection, undiluted adrenalin, the ability to turn a pit into a disco. The reason I'm in a band, the reason I traveled all the way to Texas, songwriting and playing that every band should strive for, and finally and most importantly, a bass player that is so damn hot that even *David Hasslehoff* would not be fit enough to wipe the skid-marks off his trunks. Two new tracks, a little taster for the main meal, and what a taster it is—a double-dose of pop perfection that I cannot stop playing. Every thing I've ever wanted in punk rock and loads more… way more. (SD)
(Dirtnap)

THE MEASURE [SA] – "One Chapter in the Book" LP

This LP is a compilation of songs THE MEASURE released on EPs and splits. Since they have roughly a dozen records out, chances are if you read the record reviews you've heard someone try to describe this band before. Their music sounds more indie rock than punk rock, but they definitely have a distinct DIY feel to them that you don't get from most indie bands—kind of like if LEMURIA tried to make an indie rock album. After listening to their records over the last few years I've decided that I find them boring, but there are shitload of people that will disagree with me. The folks over at *Razorcake* eat this up, and I even think my roommate gave them a good review in the last issue of *MRR*. See, they really do release an album every month! (FS)
(Kiss of Death)

MIND ERASER – "Conscious/Unconscious" 12"

Two long, brutal, and punishing tracks from this amazing Boston HC band. There are heavy riffs, blast-beats, slow and vicious parts… this is fucking epic. It makes me think this may be the *Jerusalem* (a.k.a. *Dope Smoker*) of powerviolence. Continues along the lines of their second LP. Descriptions for records of this caliber are worthless; you should skip reading about them and instead just buy it. Cover art by MOTÖRHEAD's in-house artist Joe Petagno. (VL)
(Clean Plate)

MOTORMOUTH MABEL / STEVE HIT MIKE – split EP

There are some bands that can do the whole humorous punk rock type deal well enough that they don't seem like a waste of time—for example, a band like LOVE SONGS. They were great at writing not only catchy songs, and their lyrics were also funny and well thought-out. MOTORMOUTH

MABEL seems like they're going for the same thing, but can't make it work. STEVE HIT MIKE at least makes me think they care about more serious things—drunken driving and shitheaded people are two issues being tackled here. Unfortunately, they don't really do it for me. I'm not into this at all. (BD)
(Tick Tock)

MOVIE STAR JUNKIES – "Melville" CD

It seems a bit strange that a band that calls themselves MOVIE STAR JUNKIES would have the desire to do an entire album tribute to *Moby Dick* author Herman Melville. Yet, here it is. The music is more upbeat and optimistic than I would expect. It is garage rock sea shanties with uplifting melodies that float along with the waves. The vocals are very over-dramatic in a NICK CAVE style. The song "Run Away From Me," adds a female HOLLY GOLIGHLTY sound-alike which provides a nice contrast. They should have her sing more often. Surprisingly—actually I mean luckily—there is no song called "The White Whale" or something as obvious as that. An odd overall concept, but MOVIE STAR JUNKIES make it work. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

NARSAAK – "Prasnia" EP

If the name rings a bell, it's because this is the same NARSAAK from the late '90s German metal/crust scene. Their EP on Per Koro is a total ripper, as is the split with STACK, and they've been back playing shows for a couple of years now (ten-year itch anyone?). Their rebirth comes along with an updated sound; this EP fits perfectly into the Scandinavian-worshipping D-beat crust 'n' roll mold, but when it's this fucking good, that's easily forgivable. NARSAAK is on the slick, polished, well-recorded end of the D-beat spectrum (as opposed to the "we recorded in a paper bag instead of a studio" approach, which is no less marvelous when done right), with heavy-ass mid-tempo breakdowns that explain why all the FHK (Flat Hat Kids) are into TRAGEDY. Solos abound when solos are appropriate; fortunately, solos seem to be appropriate in virtually every song. For the closest comparison, look to DISFEAR (the riffing in "Zero Leader" is pretty much a straight rip, in the best way), but basically, NARSAAK sounds exactly like what you like if you like what they sound like. And if that doesn't make sense, then NARSAAK plays down-tuned rock and roll D-beat crust to near perfection. (WN)
(Gastarbeiter)

NATIONAL DISASTERS – "And It Begins" CD

NATIONAL DISASTERS oscillates between orchestral drama to rasping and clanging melodi-crust. A vision of a devastated city, piled skulls, the outlines of birds in flight. Clichés maybe, but these aesthetics are perfectly tuned to the sound they have created. It's lightly hollow and tinny...more like hearing the record from a boombox amongt the rubble. With this kind of dynamic content and compelling lyrics, I think we'll see even better things from NATIONAL DISASTERS in the future. (AA)
(Active Rebellion)

THE NERVES – "One Way Ticket" LP

This is some of the most perfect pop music ever recorded—easily up there with THE KINKS, JAM 7"s, the early BEATLES… Actually I like 'em better than THE BEATLES. THE NERVES emerged from the late-'70s LA power-pop/punk scene, playing shows with THE DILS, THE ZEROS, THE WEIRDOS, and self-releasing what surely is one of the best pop 45s ever set to wax. I think it's really hard to make a great pop record, one that isn't gloopy and leaden or sentimental in a way that renders it repulsive. Managing to capture that teenage feeling? Few can do it, and I think the fact that this band recorded a perfect 45 and then called it quits solidifies their place in the canon for me. This beautifully packaged LP is released via Bomp! in tribute to Greg Shaw, who helped get the word out in the beginning. It's the first reissue to have the backing of all three band members, and features the 7" along with some dreamy sounding bedroom recordings and a lot of live material from different eras of the musicians' histories. The recording of Peter and Paul singing "Many Roads to Follow" in Paul's Folsom Street apartment is so transcendent. Really, it's enough to make a girl wanna disappear. (LG)
(Alive)

NO CONNECTION – "Second to None" EP

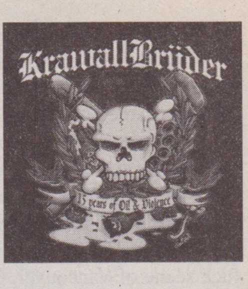
Looking at the front cover, you might think NO CONNECTION is super bubblegum pop punk, but this record actually kicks ass. Barb from I OBJECT does the vocals, and NO CONNECTION plays trashy pop punk that has a lot of similarities to DISCOUNT. I can also hear a SCREECHNG WEASEL influence in there, too. Unlike most records that have goofy cartoon covers, a lot of thought went into the lyrics. They go back and forth from political to personal in a real natural way. I'm not ragging on the cover—don't get me wrong, it's good. But there is a certain type of music that goes with this visual aesthetic, and it seems the music runs counter to those visuals. Anyway, this record is totally recommended for fans of Lookout! and Recess Records style pop punk. (FS)
(Barbarossa)

NODZZZ – LP

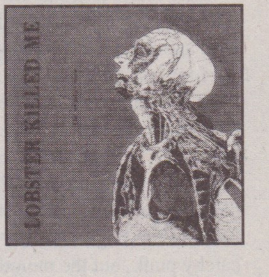
Sometimes you need to strip things right down to get to the heart of it. The NODZZZ have taken rock 'n' roll as we know it and reduced it to two guitars, drums, and off-key vocals. In doing so, they have managed to come up with something wonderful. Easily top-ten material, possibly top three of the year. Since this came out, it has scarcely left the turntable. It has the feel of *Killed By Death* thud punk with the DIY fun of a band like FYP or TOYS THAT KILL—100% fun and good times, but with a scary weirdo edge. These cats could sit snugly alongside bands on Goner and Douchemaster, but as easily have the kids bopping in a basement in Wisconsin. It gets back to the hooks and songwriting—these speccy nerds have 'em all over this disc. Can't recommend this highly enough. (TB)
(What's Your Rupture?)

NO TALK – "Tighten The Noose" EP

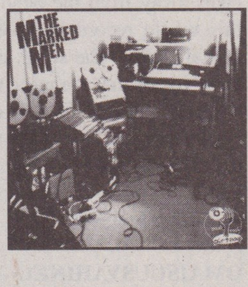
Fuck all! These Houston, Texas assholes have come to bury your next of kin!! This rough-hewn scum-punk has gruff vocals, massive bass and drum attack, and busy guitar work! This bad music is steeped in the juices of GG ALLIN AND THE JABBERS. That's high praise coming from this quarter!! Mr. KG Beasley plays guitar and growls like a skinhead gargling with bourbon and broken glass. Tom of Montrose on bass and The Wolf on drums team up to blow holes in the foundation of punk rock!! NO TALK begins the barrage with "Tighten the Noose." Fuck yes! This is some fucking evil rock 'n' roll!! The menacing black undercurrent of this death-rattle punk will leave a bad taste in your mouth! Song two on side A is "Counter Culture Nazis," and we know that some of the punk police at *MRR* could stand accused in this department. Flip this EP over and NO TALK bludgeons you with some of their strongest material. On "Backlash (No Scene)" you don't get a chance to recover from the initial blows before you are clobbered again! "Backlash" leaves you weak as a kitten—unprepared for "HTXNFS" with its brutal BONECRUSHER type of full frontal assault. Fuck! You punks and skins better be careful out there! NO TALK is coming to your town and they are taking no prisoners! (BR)
(AG82/Cutthroat/Death Exclamation/Psychowolf)

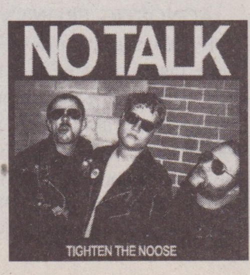


LET'S DANCE
CRAZY / SWEET KISS



LOVINGTHUNDER
MOUNTAINHIGH





NÜ SENSAE – LP

NÜ SENSAE played in my friend's front room recently, and they were so loud that at some point the cops came and shined a light at them through the window until they stopped. All they are is bass and drums and a lady growler, but it's so good. They are super panicky, paranoid grunge punk in that more metal-leaning way rather than indie pop or whatever. Hailing from the ever-amazing noise-fuck scene of Vancouver, Canada, they do not disappoint. I can't even think of what to compare them to—possibly SONIC YOUTH (but only *Confusion Is Sex*) or BABES IN TOYLAND, but way more to the point and faster. They call themselves voodoo punk and somehow it fits. Mega-distorted bass, two-note riffs (if that), driving heavy drums, and grrrl growl/screams throughout. So fucking good! This is a one-sided EP, 45 rpm, fast and short songs. Only 200 copies so go get it right fucking now! (MM)
(Isolated Now Waves)

OBSERVERS – "Down on Today" EP

Here is the original demo from the now-defunct OBSERVERS, pressed into 1000 pieces of vinyl with spooky, shimmering silk-screened covers. It's got four fast, raw jams that were recorded on a four-track in a damp Portland bedroom in 2003 and were later re-recorded for other releases. This recording is exactly as under-produced and sloppy as I wish some of other OBSERVERS records were and it has some of the best stuff I've heard from them. Even in the beginning, they played great, up-beat, catchy punk, but the melodic aspects of their music shine through way less on this superbly fuzzy and trashy recording, and despite a couple moments of off-key singing, it's an excellent EP. (DA)
(Taken by Surprise)

OBTRUSIVE – "Cross the Line" CD

OBTRUSIVE plays a very updated and modern version of street punk—exactly the kind of music that was pioneered by THE UNSEEN and THE CASUALTIES. I like the lyrical content, which is anarcho-political, and very well spoken. The only thing that I dislike is the really clean sound of the instruments and recording quality, which totally takes away from the band. I wish that bands like this would record in basements instead of some digital studio. The songs are driving and have the gang vocals that are more than expected by a band like this, but it is all destroyed by the production. That being said, I will say that this is probably better than nine out of ten bands playing this style. (WK)
(Concrete Jungle)

OMAISUUSVAHINKO – "Soaa Maailmaa Vastaan" EP

AGNOSTIC FRONT's *Victim in Pain* is currently playing at *MRR* headquarters and actually some faster parts of this band remind me of the NYC stalwarts. Keep in mind that these hardcore Finnish punx also add in some elements of their native style. This record is recorded pretty scrappily and reminds me of how a punk record should sound. Although OMAISUUSVAHINKO really isn't breaking any new ground, their sound comes out scathing, aggressive, and pissed. I happen to like the less melodic approach of most Finn bands where the music just comes off as more abrasive and ruckus. Pretty fuckin' good. (WK)
(Ratbite)

OMIXLH – "Friends Forever…Punx for Life" LP

What a cool coincidence to receive this Greek street punk record on the same day that I was reading about some anarchist riots spreading across a few major Hellenic cities. And man, I don't even go for too much of this style, but this one got me to listen to the whole thing. What really holds OMIXLH together is the fact that the guitarists really know how to play and the tunes themselves are real catchy. Of course, there's the obligatory "whooahs" and an occasional shout of "Oi!" here or there. One song is sung in Greek, but the rest are English (not counting the odd song title in Spanish!). If I had to throw out some references, I'd say VIRUS, OXYMORON, or just about any other decent pogo punk band. If you're into that sort of thing, then you will be into this! (BG)
(Joe Pogo)

ONE LAST WISH – "1986" LP

Finally! Dischord has released the ONE LAST WISH CD on the proper format. This band was essentially RITES OF SPRING, the only difference being Mike Hampton (THE FAITH, EMBRACE) instead of Mike Fellows; their sole vinyl appearance prior to this LP was a track on the *State of the Union* compilation. ONE LAST WISH was short-lived, only existing for four months in 1986, but this twelve-song album is totally classic Revolution Summer-era melodic hardcore comparable to RITES OF SPRING but a little more poppy. This version also improves on the CD with the inclusion of the lyrics, and comes with a digital download card as well. A mandatory purchase. Now let's see a repress of the RAIN 12"—and the DEADLINE 12", for that matter, before they get bootlegged… (CS)
($11 ppd from: Dischord)

OPENIGHTMARE – "The Harder We Come" CD

I don't think I've heard this band before. They play melodic, chunky pop-punk with lots of guitar octaves and vocal harmonies. The production is over the top in its radio-friendly glossy sheen. I'm reminded a lot of later BAD RELIGION (which I've only heard on the radio) or, at times, syrupy '90s schlock like DOWN BY LAW. The fourth song, "You Don't Know," stands out from the rest in that it's a bit slower and is a really well crafted pop song. Overall it's not a bad record, but not groundbreaking either. (AM)
(Vegas)

ORDER OF THE VULTURE – "Death Disciple" LP

Finally, the long-delayed second ORDER OF THE VULTURE LP! While this band has adopted some of the aesthetics of black metal, other than the vocals, the music has much more in common with the riffing and ferocity of early German thrash metal. Think SODOM and KREATOR paired with the straightforward galloping of Swedish crust a la WOLFBRIGADE and SKITSYSTEM. At their best, as on "Dogs of War" and "Arch-Angel," ORDER OF THE VULTURE is both totally metal and undeniably punk. If I had to complain about anything—and you know I do—the outros are a little long, but the music is faultless. (AU)
(Aborted Society)

PHOBIA – "22 Random Acts of Violence" LP

I don't know if I really even need to review this—after eighteen years, either you love these guys or you hate 'em. That being said, I've always been impressed by PHOBIA's ability to evolve their sound while maintaining its essential elements. Certainly Shane's vocals remain a trademark, while the sound is much more death-grind than their earlier crust-influenced material. The songwriting on this album reminds me of the material on *Serenity Through Pain*—short, to-the-point blasts of grindcore in the classic sense—which is to say, more emphasis on venom and speed than technicality. "Rise Up" is a catchy fucking song. For a band whose politics are usually so spot-on, I'm a little disappointed by the lyrics to "Beer, Bitches and Bulletbelts." I hate to be the "PC police," but…these guys can do better. (AU)
(Deep Six)

THE PIST – "Ideas Are Bulletproof" LP

Beginning in '92 or so and playing their last show (not counting reunions) in May of 1996—the same month I saw my first punk gig—THE PIST, alongside fellow punkers like AUS ROTTEN, THE CASUALTIES, or BLANKS 77, were one of the more popular bands to emerge from the Northeast scene of the '90s. They were melodic and catchy enough to appeal to the chaos punx (only at the show to get drunk and pogo), but also raging and political enough to get respect from the hardcore set, and their shirts and patches can still be spotted on crusties from sea to shining sea. Personally, I'm a bit ambivalent about this particular record, a reissue of the band's one and only LP; these dudes had good politics and I kinda dig a couple of the tracks—the classic "The Customer (Is Always Right)" in particular. However, either the music hasn't aged well or my tastes have changed, 'cause I was bored outta my gourd not even halfway through the first side. Just about every song sounds *exactly* the same in a really monotonous way, and there's practically no variation whatsoever in the vocal delivery. Oh well, don't take my word for it—see below what the two Willies had to say, or better yet, as THE PIST would put it, "Form your own opinions, tell everyone to shut the fuck up!" (CS)
(Havoc)

THE PIST – "Input Equals Output Vol. 1" LP

For anyone that was not punkin' out in the early '90s, THE PIST were the quintessential anthem-makers for all the dirty kids obsessed with sing-along choruses and easily digested political lyrics. Lots of us that witnessed this period of punk rock would booze it up to their unique brand of street punk with fists pumping. Their songs still remind me of '93, pre inter-nerd values, when the scene

was still vital and even violent. Now it seems so cliché and fake compared to those times. Remember waiting for records and patches for up to a year in the mail? Remember parties that didn't include overdressed hipsters in attendance? Seriously, THE PIST had some great songs and incendiary lyrics, to say the least. This being the first installment of their discography, the LP contains the *Destroy Society* EP, as well as some demo tracks and split EPs and even a bit of a live recording. I remember Felix Havoc telling me he wanted to release their discography so that kids would have something to get into when they first hit the scene instead of second-rate bands that never really mattered. THE PIST—a mid-tempo soundtrack of youth. (WK)
(Havoc)

THE PIST – "Input Equals Output Vol. 2" LP

So all of THE PIST shit got reissued this month, for all the kids who didn't get a chance to be punk in the '90s. I don't really know where to start, because these songs have fucking melted into my brain after years of constant listening. Pure fucking punk, and though the lyrics might seem a little childish after fifteen years, there is something still so perfect about "I am not a patriot, can't you fucking see? / I believe in autonomy, I believe in me / Your America is not mine / Don't waste your breath, don't waste my time / Your America is not free / That's not how it was meant to be." Bill's guitar (later found in MANKIND?, BEHIND ENEMY LINES, CAUSTIC CHRIST, REACT, and loads more) still smokes 95% of the punk released since THE PIST split up, and the songs still hold their own amidst the heaps of bands that have come after them. These tracks are from assorted EPs and comps, as is the other volume of *Input Equals Output*, but the real magic is in the *Ideas Are Bulletproof* LP, so if you're foolish enough to only buy one of these reissues, I would go with that one. These songs are American DIY punk classics, and THE PIST are one of the bands that truly paved the way for the wave of DIY political hardcore that swept me into punk. Essential listening. (WN)
(Havoc)

THE PROZACS – "Playing the Chords We Love" CD

From the school of one main guy playing with others, this is good RAMONES-influenced pop punk. Think QUEERS, SCREECHING WEASEL, and TRAVOLTAS, too. A very solid full-length that holds up against the big boys. (RL)
(Cheapskate)

THE RATS – LP

I've been waiting for the day when the RATS records would finally get the reissue treatment. One look at Mississippi's version of first RATS record and I know why it's taken so long. Aside from the fact that the Coles are forward-looking folks and prefer to focus on their current projects, it seems to me that the original master tapes and album artwork from this release are long-gone. I assume that this was mastered straight from the original vinyl or a crusty, acidified old reel, because the sound is totally off; I noticed way more hiss and treble and there's a wavey warbling that isn't present on the 1980 press. Oh well, THE RATS debut LP is a long-lost classic that will have any fan of early American punk or the /DEAD MOON/PIERCED ARROWS/RANGE RATS/Cole cult dancin' and smilin'. The music is great. These catchy, simple songs guarantee days of stuck-in-your-head delirium. THE RATS have everything that one could want from an early-'80s non-hardcore punk band: out-of-tune harmonies, snappy drumming, dark overtones with a pop sensibility. They are reminiscent of many other early Northwest US and even Vancouver punk bands—imagine a less-dark WIPERS, an older, wiser STYPHNOIDS, or if early era-POINTED STICKS shed some of their pop. I think every song on this record is great and I've listened to it nearly 1000 times over the years. I'm sure I'm being over-picky due to my familiarity with the original recording, but I am disappointed with the sound on this reissue, although I'm sure the quality has something to do with the fact that we're dealing with 28-year-old materials. Don't get me wrong, it's great that these obscure recordings are finally accessible because most of us aren't crazy enough to pay the entrance fee for the original, but I will probably keep the Whizeagle press on my want list due to its superiority in sound. That said, this RATS reissue comes wholly recommended for those that don't have the original. (CI)
(Mississippi)

RED FOX – "Year of the Rat" LP

Dirgy punk with a strong BLACK SABBATH influence; sounds like ANNIHILATION TIME might be their closest bros. The riffs are great—heavy and catchy like good riffs should be. The playing is good and I'm really enjoying the drum fills. The lyrics are cool too, 'cause every band should sing about "Road Dog Zombies." But the singer, fuck, you are killing me. Your voice is so nasal it is giving me a huge fucking headache. It reminds me of an adult, chain-smoking Emmanuelle Lewis. (VL)
(Chaos and Distortion)

RED THREAD – "Double Speak" EP

Here we have the first EP released by this Boston band of punk gals, though they've been a band for a few years with a couple of line-up changes along the way. RED THREAD had two demo tapes before releasing this piece of vinyl, their second tape being their best work to date, in my opinion. This 7" isn't too far off the mark from that one. It's catchy mid-tempo hardcore with a few faster parts and some weird guitar fills here and there. When the guitar kicks in on side A, it feels like you're listening to *My War*-era BLACK FLAG. It's totally distorted and fragmented. And then the screaming, high-pitched vocals blast through the speakers, singing about a whole slew of different topics, such as being women in punk and sexual politics. Overall, it's a pretty awesome release of modern hardcore with an early-'80s feel. (DA)
(Shock to the System)

REFUSE/ALL – "What Lurks Beneath?" CD

One-dimensional Brit-punk from London. Kinda like a slower, gruffer VARUKERS mixed with the RESTARTS. Decent anti-state lyrics, but where are the hooks, man??? (TB)
(self-released)

SCHLIESSMUSKEL – "1986-89" CD

A German combo that sings in German—I've never heard of this band from those years. Maybe it's the third song on this collection, titled "HIV-Test" with its chorus of "1 2 3 4, fucking the asshole" that killed any chance for a good review here. Between 1986 and 1989, there were some pretty great bands around, like MEGA CITY FOUR and LEATHERFACE. So this basic, mediocre melodic punk ranks pretty low for me when going back to yesteryear. (RL)
(Plastic Bomb)

SECRET PROSTITUTES – "Skandinavia 79" EP

I love those records where you have no idea what decade it's from. No information on the record, and other than the fact that this is sold out, there's not much I can tell ya. The band sings in a foreign language…looks Nordic, but could be made-up. The music? Retard thud punk—kinda like the super early Swedish *Killed By Death* gear such as KRIMINELLA GI-

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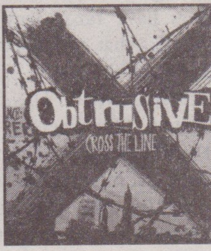
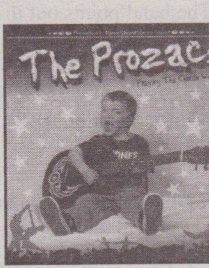
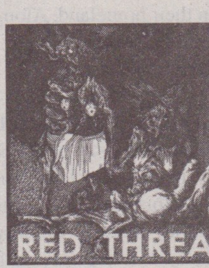






SEX DEVIANTS

STEEL CAPS
Knuckle Samich & the
BLACK EYES
WARM PABST

TARRER or PROBLEM? Could easily be from an old *Bloodstains* comp. I'm guessing they are new though, just mining the sounds of yore… Pretty fuckin' legit. Lo-fi as fuck, yet still catchy. Throw 'em in with new heads like DIE ROTZZ and the like and you'd be in the ballpark. Digging it. (TB)
(Psycho Wolf/AG82/Death Exclamations/Cutthoat)

SELF DESTRUCT – "All My Friends Are Dead" EP

Yes! SELF DESTRUCT cranks up the volume really high on this blistering 7" EP. These UK punkers have razor-sharp punk chops complete with hooks that one associates with No Way Records bands like WASTED TIME and GOVERNMENT WARNING. The catchy punk melodies of the opener, "The Enemy," crash headlong into the next number, "All My Friends Are Dead." This one-minute blast of adrenalin will scorch your fucking earlobes! Put away your MINOR THREAT *Out Of Step* records, this is the shit that represents the new age! SELF DESTRUCT continues to pummel you on the flip with the song "Spying Eyes." Fucking A! The band points out that more than 4.2 million closed-circuit TV cameras are in operation in the UK. Say hello to Big Brother. The finale, "Stuck Again," is equally great! This band deserves your immediate attention! (BR)
(Zandor)

SEX DEVIANTS – "Pozpatku" CD

The fourth album from this Czech band varies from pop punk to screaming melodic hardcore with sometimes gal vocals. Sung in foreign tongue, this is decent stuff from a band that is apparently popular in their homeland. Along the way of Dr. Strange or even Fat stuff. (RL)
(Papagajuv Hilasatel)

SEX/VID – "Communal Living" LP

What can I say about SEX/VID that hasn't already been said to death in these pages? I really do love this band, and I think they warrant all the hype they receive. *Communal Living* marks their debut as a five-piece, with the addition of Dave from BEHEAD THE PROPHET on second guitar. I can only foresee this to be a positive change, as this 45-rpm 12" is SEX/VID's most ferocious output yet. The vocals sound meaner and the second guitar has room to wander, adding new layers of madness to the already filthy tunes. This works best on the more mid-paced parts of the record, of which there are many—slower, lurching "Nightstalkers" that most effectively highlight SEX/VID's damaged hardcore. Housed in a beautiful tip-on jacket, this is once again a perfect product. (JU)
(Dom America, no address)

THE SHAKING HANDS – "Liars Are For Punching" LP

These Gainesville dudes do a good job writing songs in a style that's kind of hard to pin down. The vocals sound a lot like Al Barr, formerly of THE BRUISERS, now of DROPKICK MURPHYS, but the music is far from those bands. THE SHAKING HANDS are more along the lines of the newer OFF WITH THEIR HEADS songs—a little poppy, lots of energy, and simple but not boring. There's even an acoustic/electric folksy AGAINST ME!-sounding tune at the end. The only thing here I don't like is the very polished and clear recording quality. I'll take the recorded-in-a-living room sound over the high-quality, clean-and-produced sound any day. (BD)
(ADD/Kiss of Death)

SHEARING PINX / STAMINA MANTIS – split EP

The chaotic noisecore that is SHEARING PINX reminds of the classic noise-mindfuck punk bands of the '90s on GSL—ARAB ON RADAR, for instance. The songs are suitably intense and possibly seizure-inducing, but the locked groove sold me. How mean, right? No one likes to flip a 7", so that little bit of oscillating noise may go on for hours for the particularly lazy. STAMINA MANTIS has a little more room to breathe in their sound, but is a shade darker and more no-wave than noise. (AA)
(Reluctant)

SHOCK TROOP – "A Nightmare in 2012" LP

With a couple of sevens already under their bullet belts, Austria's SHOCK TROOP graduated to the 12" format for this release. The first thing that comes to mind when I hear these tunes is the legendary hardcore masters LIP CREAM. The singer is shredding his chords and the shouted back-ups really lend themselves to a LIP CREAM comparison. The riffs are distinctly Japcore-influenced and the guitar solos fly high all over this thing and fit the music like a glove. My favorite song is the mid-paced number "No Truth" on the B-side. The single-note guitar melodies played over the basslines that move all over the fretboard bring to mind early-2000's Japcore bands like BALANCE and ETÆ. Some of the faster numbers remind me of the Portland band BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS from a few years back. I think it's the pace and the way that the vocalist sometimes changes his voice from a scream to an agonizing grunt. Pretty solid record here. (SE)
(Sniperfucker)

SHORT RABBITS – "Dying by Inches" LP

This is the debut release from this Cleveland trio. Heavy rockin' stuff. The album artwork and sound quality of the recording are both really good; however, the music itself doesn't really stick out. There isn't a thing wrong with it but nothing stands out to make it great—SHORT RABBITS is just your typical local loud rock bar band. (MU)
(My Mind's Eye)

THE SKABS – "Revenge of the Skabs" CD

Diary of an adopted thirty-something put to the soundtrack of sloppy punk rock with a garage flair. If you don't mind me placing my *analrapist* hat on for a moment: singer—is this band your therapy, or are you just reveling in your horrible past? Starts off with a rant about his fake (read: foster) parents and their mistreatment. Second song is about being ripped off by a former lover who is also a junkie, third song is about his deadbeat town and how its inhabitants have wronged him, and it continues. Instead of a list of songs and titles there's a blurb on the beauty of revenge. Fans of GG ALLIN take note. I would have rather reviewed the abridged, short-story version. (Read: words, not music.) (VL)
(Black and Blue)

THE SLOWMOTIONS – "Mystery Action" EP

Yes! Another single by SLOWMOTIONS, this being their sixth, and what a treat it is. Each single is slightly different yet tantalizing. "Mystery Action" is so energetic and anthemic—a bouncy, '77-styled ripper like THE VIBRATORS cranked up really high. Total fist-pumping action galore. The flipside, "Dance," is a rhythmic ditty that'll have the stiffest square swinging hips and shaking ass. SLOWMOTIONS nail it every time, from the killer artwork to the catchiest tunes. 100% recommended. Do yourself a favor and track down the discography LP on Partners In Crime, too. (RR)
(H:G Fact)

SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND – "The Second Chance" 2xCD

Two discs of decent-sound-quality live recordings of Fred "Sonic" Smith's post-MC5 band live at Ann Arbor's Second Chance. Those who want this historical artifact will probably have already bought it, while those who regard the MC5 as overblown and the RENDEZVOUS BAND as, at best, a sometimes-inspired bar band will pass without regret. For any undecided but curious youngsters, start with the *City Slang* single. Hell, you can listen to it on Youtube for free with a slide show thrown in. (DD)
(Applebush)

STEVE HIT MIKE – "I Got So Hammered" CD

I wonder what Fat Mike thinks about the legacy he's created. I have to say that NOFX is a bit of a guilty pleasure for me. They were one of the first bands I got into when I started listening to punk, and they're arguably the best band in whatever you want to call their subgenre. But what about all the clone bands? What's the point of even starting a band if you want to sound just like an already well-known, über-successful band? STEVE HIT MIKE takes their songs and feeds them through the patented NOFX-ulator to get that sound that so many others have already beaten into the ground time and again. (BD)
(Anarchy Pancakes)

STRUGGLING FOR REASON – "Nothing More Than an Outlet" CD

On this six-song CD, STRUGGLING FOR REASON out of Belgium plays a speedy style of Fat Wreck Chords-influenced punk. Think of NO USE FOR A NAME and NOFX and maybe a little of their Dutch neighbors NRA. SEARCHING FOR REASON is still developing but already have some pretty good songs in "Givin' Up the Ghost" and "Misfortune." Good, melodic speedy punk with rough and sandy vocals. (RK)
(self-released)

SUBMARINE RACES – "Hard to Look At, Easy to See" LP

The first few songs were really well played,

but nothing grabbed me. It's an amalgam of poppy UK DIY and sub-par indie pop, or maybe a bland blend of the SWELL MAPS and the MODERN LOVERS. Around songs three or four, things start to get interesting and the songs start coming together. There's some cool guitar work that kinda stands out and a cool instrumental. The hot streak lasted through the next couple songs, then it slowly petered out and it all started sounding like half decent indie rock again. That theme seems to stay the course. When the singer muses that "maybe [he] should go to art school," it sounds less like satire, a little like irony, but more like a good idea. (P$)
(In The Red)

SUBVERSION – "Child Abuse" EP

Game of the Arseholes has bestowed us with a well-executed reissue highlighting a barely known early-'80s Belgian hardcore band. This release combines all of SUBVERSION's previously issued and hard-to-find compilation material onto one handy 7", ensuring them a more stable place in the Euro hardcore history books. Also included in this package is a booklet collecting several short and charming interviews, crude reprints of flyers and reviews, and a Shit-Fi manifesto. SUBVERSION played bare-bones, raw hardcore with evident nods to DISCHARGE. These Belgians came from the less CIMEX, more VARUKERS, and slightly subdued school of D-beat. The cymbals are quiet and tinny and the bass is a little too high in the mix, but the guitar solos are envy-inducing wail-blasts that rank with the best of the genre. Even though SUBVERSION doesn't immediately destroy your hearing like some of their noisier counterparts, they've got powerful hooks and their music has an ever-welcomed sense of honesty. I'm really glad this document of their short life was released. (CI)
(Game of the Arseholes)

SUCIEDAD DISCRIMINADA – "Larga Vida Al Punk Rock" CD

Dudes from Mexico singing about Joe Strummer and road trippin' it a la *Starsky and Hutch*. It's well intentioned but generic melodic punk. Allow me a Roehrs-eque moment of lyric sharing. They get bonus point for lines like "Joe Strummer, Joe Ramone, we'll always remember you / In the name, in the name, of punk rock!" It takes a MINUTEMEN-style charm and lack of pretense to make declarations and finish sentences with "in the name of punk rock," and in all seriousness these dudes make it work. This may have less of an appeal to the punk world at large, but I can definitely see it as a nice closing chapter for the band and their friends as well as a nice remembrance of the band's eight-year run. (P$)
(Volya)

SUPER SEXY BOY 1986 – "Royal Peacocks" CD

In the world of bad band names, this ranks pretty high. I don't know if it's so bad it's good, or if it's just bad. These guys are a garage band from Italy, so maybe the name translates better in Italian…probably not. They say they're from Italy but the singer doesn't sound a lick Italian—he sings in perfect English and kind of sounds a lot like the singer of REIGNING SOUND. The music even kind of reminds me of REIGNING SOUND's hard rock songs. They also have bits of LYNYRD SKYNYRD style Southern rock in there sometimes, but only hints. (FS)
(Zodiac Killer)

TEENAGE PANZERKORPS – "Games For Slaves" LP

First imagine someone pulling out a box that's been in various dank and moldy basements over the years, filled with their VELVET UNDERGROUND and WARSAW/JOY DIVISION/NEW ORDER cassettes, long ago sun-bleached and warped from the dashboard of their first car in high school, covered in soda and other teenage stickiness. Now, the tapes still play, but are beyond warbly, so you stuff the tape ribbon along with a "How to Speak German" cassette into a kong filled with peanut butter. Throw it down the steps and watch as your new puppy chases after it and plays with the thing for a while. Take the tape out before the dog eats it and wash it off. Splice it all together, and this is what you get—the second full-length from DER TEENAGE PANZERKORPS—and who can't get behind V.U., JOY DIVISION, peanut butter, and puppies? That's what they sound like to me ears. (RR)
(Siltbreeze)

TEENERS – "Pill Me" EP

Mostly competent spit-punk slime from Texas—quick and mean, with some good guitar work buried in the mix. The hooks are fine and grating, the second song being the standout by far, with layers of vocal mess. I could see it being a hit live. This record doesn't knock me over but it doesn't really slap me in the face, either. Buy it if you got some money. (BB)
(Rocket Reducer)

YOUNG LIVERS – "Them Damned Young Livers" CD

Hillbilly punk from Kansas City. Back in the day, I think this would be called "cow punk" and this does conjure up memories of THE HICKOIDS. It also reminds me a lot of ELVIS HITLER. Anyway—it's a lot of fun. (AD)
(self-released)

TOM AND THE TORNADOES – "Long Pony Tail/Judy"

More of the cultural archeology that Norton does so well, these two tracks were originally released on Northway Sound in 1962 (this single is volume two of "The Northway Sound Records Story") and feature Tommy James backed by the band that later became the original SHONDELLS. A-side is a FIREBALLS cover, while "Judy" is a cool ballad, both with a nice, semi-crude garage sound quality (though in this case the garage was actually the back of a record store). So mote it be! (DD)
(Norton)

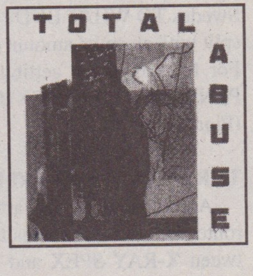
THE TORPEDO MONKEYS – "Lunchtime With The Torpedo Monkeys" CD

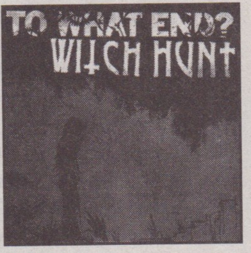
A monkey-masked band from Germany whose main influence is THE CRAMPS. It's rockabilly-ish rock 'n' roll. And in case you didn't get it while listening to the rest of the CD, the bonus tracks include a cover of THE CRAMPS' "Like a Bad Girl Should." Inexplicably, the band also does an odd lounge-y cover of THE DEAD KENNEDYS' "Let's Lynch the Landlord." It sure is funny when those lyrics are sung all slow and stuff. (CK)
(Zodiac Killer)

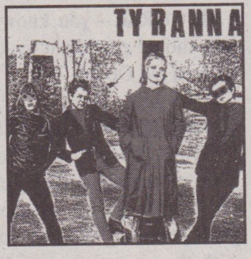
TOTAL ABUSE – CD

Finally, after much teasing and foreplay, the TOTAL ABUSE full-length is out and totally worth the wait! This album is pure bloody-knuckles-wrapped-around-a-bottle-of-despair music—a soundtrack for modern times. I listen to this shit while running and I want to push people out of my way, stomp on top of shiny, expensive cars, and then run against the traffic in the middle of the street. I'm not fucking around here. Imagine the nihilistic hardcore intensity of a band like SEX/VID mixed with everything musically cool about BLACK FLAG and you're just *starting* to get the picture. Some songs are driving on the mid-tempo side and make you slip slowly into madness, and others are fast and relentless, perfect for skating top speed down the steepest hills in town. You should already have the two EPs by this point (*Sex Pig* and the demo

SUBVERSION







SVERIGEMANGEL
PUNK & HARDCORE COMPILATION
BRUTAL MUSIK FÖR EN BRUTAL VÄRLD!

7"), but if you don't, the CD version has both of 'em as bonus tracks to catch you up on things. I usually don't keep CDs…I'm keep this one. Fantastic! (BG)
(Deranged)

TO WHAT END? / WITCH HUNT – split EP

If you enjoyed the fuller, more raging WITCH HUNT of their *Blood Red States* LP, then this is your damn day. Here's two more of the same powerful, dynamic crusty punk that they are known for, plus a rad cover of "Cosmetic Plague." The stalwart Swedes TO WHAT END? hold up their end of this split with an equal amount of grit and inspired rage. For fans of ladies getting their brutality on, and PENI and ANTI-CIMEX devotees. (AA)
(Final Attempt)

TYRANNA – "Back Off Baby" EP

A cool, snotty punk artifact from late-'70s Toronto with rad girl vocals that falls somewhere between X-RAY SPEX and THE AVENGERS. The same exuberant fuck-yeah feel you get from listening to NASTY FACTS on your headphones can be achieved with this 7". It has this great basement feel—total abandoned warehouse dance party punk. Like a less-perfect AVENGERS, if that makes sense; this band was not as fully formed, but has similar driving, anthemic guitars and tough girl vocals. All the songs have a slightly different feel to them, which gives the record an interesting texture. The song "Neighbour" reminds me of THE UNDERTONES. I guess TYRANNA only ever released one over-produced song on a compilation, so this is the only representation of what they *actually* sounded like. They played shows with the VILETONES and THE CURSE—you know *that* was a ragin' time. You should get this, it fucking rules. (LG)
(Boppa Do Down)

UNWELCOME GUESTS – "The Painter" EP

Wow—has this got a death rock influence? Melodic punk that could be on a support bill for JOY DIVISION. Just a little bit, anyway. It has these great pounding drums throughout that clash nicely with the singer's voice. Another new record with an old feel—this could also fit on a REPLACEMENTS bill. I like punk bands that are influenced by THE REPLACEMENTS a lot more than I actually like THE REPLACEMENTS. This sounds great—good songwriting, plenty of hooks, and even the odd chill-factor moment. It's a wee bit JAWBREAKER, too. Recommended. (AD)
(Art of the Underground)

USELESS I.D. – "The Lost Broken Bones" CD

This band most known for being from Israel goes commercial here. Radio-ready melodic pop punk—I'm thinking snippets on some MTV soap opera. Maybe there is a hit on this, and I'm no enemy of bands that have moved on sound-wise after ten years. Props for their endurance in a country with little chance for success for this music, but this is too unoriginal and obvious to enjoy. (RL)
(Suburban Home)

VIRGINS – "Miscarriage" LP

Mid-tempo melodic punk from Florida. They manage to avoid the whatever-the-current-flavor-of-the-month-is-in-Gainesville pitfall and come off as original and fresh. I like this—it's different, political without being too predictable, and as a nice old-school '80s punk/college radio crossover vibe going on at times. Don't get me wrong though—this is rough enough, too. (AD)
(Kiss of Death)

VOMIT – "Bloody Awful" CD

Oh gosh, how clever. Badly recorded by-the-numbers bar thrash with songs about bitches, blowjobs, and an especially charming little number called "Helen Rotten Twat." Oh, and porn samples. How novel. I can't think of a single reason why this album should exist. (AU)
(self-released)

WAVVES – LP

The fruits of their rock sounds like if the progeny of JAPANTHER and EAT SKULL was also kind of into BRIAN WILSON. The garage-new-wavvey-lo-fi fuzzed-out aesthetic doesn't always work so well with a lot of the songs on this one. I'm more into the clean lo-fi minimalism of the song "Vermin." Where I thought some of the EAT SKULL songs benefited from being buried in the red, it's kind of hindering these songs. I could see this band (dude?) being on the road to crucial. Right now it's decent for sure, but not epic. (P$)
(Woodsist)

THE WEAKENDS – LP

Engagingly loose garagey-folksy-bluesy charm with odd bits of twee-ness ooze out of this disc. If you're looking for a compelling get/not-get clue, I guess a BLACK LIPS reference would not be out of order since this on Rob's House Records. And this isn't entirely dissimilar in feel to the BLACK LIPS in their more subdued moments. S'alright? S'alright! (DD)
(Rob's House)

WILD GIFT – CD

'77-style punk. Grrrl vocals in German (I think). Hint of that Oi! sing-along thing. Not bad, not mindblowing. (MM)
(Plastic Bomb)

WORMEATERS – "Cattle Cannot Choose" EP

When I first dropped the needle, I heard a vocalist who sounded like the singer from BIOHAZARD. This New Jersey band plays simple, speedy hardcore with some early-'90s hardcore leanings. At first I thought I was in for another NYHC tough-guy hardcore band, but the music isn't as heavy, plus the lyrics are better and clearly anti-government/anti-imperialist. Think a political version of WARZONE or early CRO-MAGS. They also remind me a little of WASTED TIME. This sound just doesn't grab my interest even if the lyrics are good. (MH)
(American Waste)

V/A – "Den Magiska Cirkeln Hardcore Compilation" EP

Northern Europe is freakin' killing it lately, and this five-band Swedish compilation just further demonstrates the point. To save myself from slipping into repetition, I won't bother trying to portray each band to you, because I could sort of throw them into the same category of description. That's not to say that they sound the same or anything because each band is unique, but they all seem to mix the Swedish hardcore sound with late-'70s/early-'80s new wave and punk vibes in their own way. You probably already know of INSTÅNGD, but you will also dig the others: BAD AMPUTATION, SVARTENBRANDT, THURNEMAN, and FÖRMÖGENHET. A very cool comp indeed. (BG)
(Den Magiska Cirkeln)

V/A – "Lambination!!!" CD

CD compilations are pretty much always a slog to get through, and this one isn't much different. Featuring mostly Fat Wreck-style melodic punk/hardcore bands from all over the world, all of which are new to me. The one stand out here was the UK82 stylings of Capetown, South Africa's MUTINY. (JU)
(Deadlamb)

V/A – "Music by People Who Like Drinking Cider in the Gutter" CD

Jesus, what did I do to deserve this? What we have here is a compilation CD containing a variety of current UK street punk, pop punk, and ska-orientated bands. This falls neatly into the "not my thing" category. But honestly, while I couldn't stand the music on this CD, all the bands seem sincere and I am sure there are people who could care less what I think about gutter drinkin' cider punks, so I'll keep it short. Bands on this include DOG TOFFEE, FAINTEST IDEA, BUZZKILL, SHADOWCOPS, KIRKZ, SPEEDING BEE, DEATH BY DECIBLES, THE FRACTIONS, and many, many others. (LG)
(TNS)

V/A – "Sverigemangel: Brutal Musik For En Brutal Varld" CD

I hope to the holy that *MRR* prints the cover of this thing in the mag—it's like a moose (?) silhouette with earphones on and high-tension wire towers behind it. Amazing. All I could think about before I actually listened to this disc was how bad it was going to be. I tried having an open mind, but my prejudices were hard to ignore once the comp got going. Now, I do not claim to be a Swedish D-beat/crust connoisseur, so call me uniformed about the aesthetic and the brutal nature of the moose, but I am comfortable enough with hardcore in general to make an informed opinion about the bands. That said—this is an all-in-all mediocre and predictable comp, though it does have its exceptions, few as they may be. HUMAN WASTE contributes a single track that *rips!!* Hands down cake-taker here. The melodic ETT SISTA ANDETAG has a couple of keepers and KRISSITUATION also give a good showing. The remaining bands on the comp play in the narrow range of Scandi-core that, after a short time, becomes very tiresome. This is one of those releases where if you're already into the style, you'll be into it, but no converts here. (RM)
(Anarchopunx)

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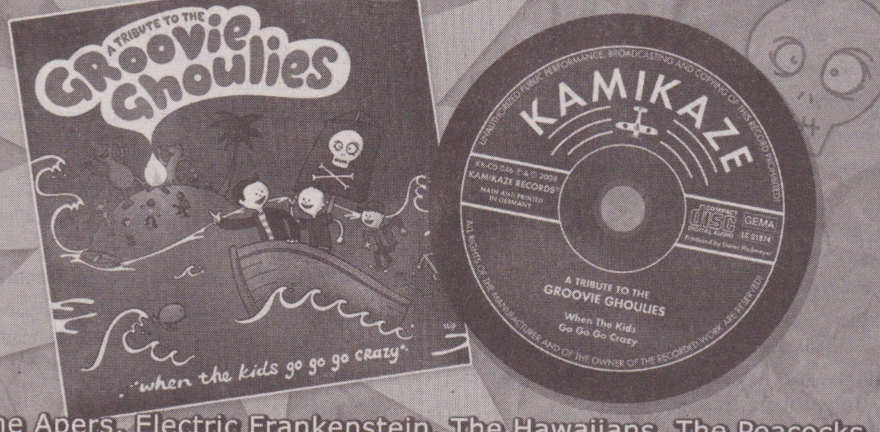
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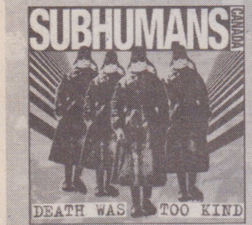

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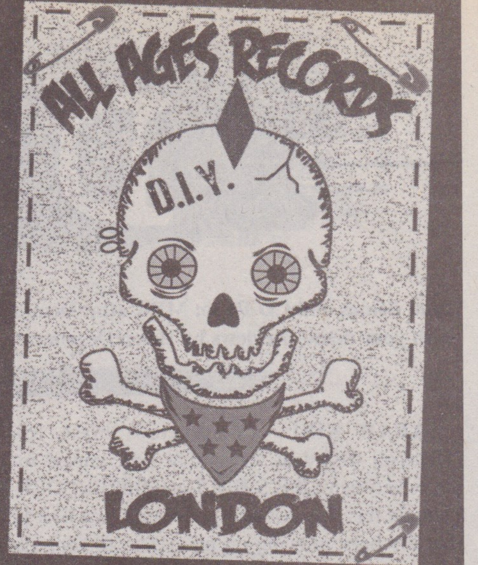

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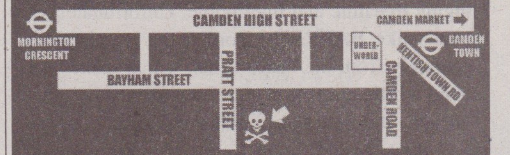

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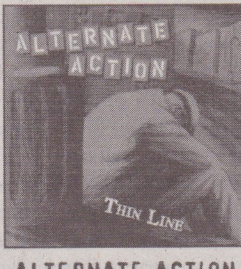

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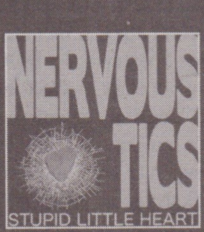

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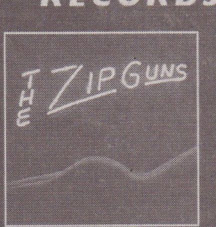

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DEMOS

Send demos and CD-Rs to: MRR attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please provide a postpaid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Helen Degenerate, Dan Goetz, Vinnie La Russa, and Cissie Scurlock.

ARAH KIRI – Youth crew thrash from Malaysia with dual vocals that I'd compare to a cross between LIFE'S HALT and BETERCORE. I thought this was just all right when I first heard it, but it's been growing on me. (Dan) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, arahkiri_northborneo@yahoo.com.my)

BARREN – Man, the vocalist for this band is really awesome. She's way steady and keeps her singing dynamic and intelligible. Unfortunately, it sounds like BARREN recorded the vocal tracks separately from the instruments, which makes her sound a little uninspired, but I am allured by what I'm sure the live shows offer. BARREN sounds like what would happen after a hypothetical teenage SLEATER KINNEY got in a turf war with BLATZ and THE MUFFS. I like it a lot—trusty and dramatic Chicago punk. The Chicago punk scene is not something that the whole country gets to see a lot, but when it does, it by no means disappoints. (Helen) (7-song CD no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/barrenband3)

BEARS / WRITTEN AND ERASED – Fuck, I love octave pedals. WRITTEN AND ERASED has a tight dissonant hardcore sound, with a splash of instrumental harmony that is reminiscent of Atlanta's GOD'S AMERICA. Guitarists in bands like this are always very impressive because, as if it were a miracle, they know how to make zombie movie soundtracks into a punk record. WRITTEN AND ERASED and BEARS sound a lot alike, but they sound *really* good. The split itself is beautifully produced. I appreciate this rash of really well made artsy hardcore from the south. Keep up the good work! (Helen) (9-song CD, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/maydaymaydayrecords)

BLACK OPS – The first track "Reality" has sluggish vocals and got me worried about the rest of the demo, but no fear, BLACK OPS picks up significantly. Despite this South Carolinian four-piece's dedication to predictable hardcore, they have a pretty cool song about the contemporary effects of slavery and a few other songs about class warfare and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Unfortunately, they have the ideological integrity of a cookie by keeping radical causes separate in the song "Working Class Slave"—"Attack the poor and homeless / It's the easier thing to do / You're a fucking pussy / The way you act." Although I feel certain that my complaint would be answered with their song "My Friend"—"So before you bitch, ask yourself, What am I doing? /...don't attack the caring citizens / Who are doing what they can." Apparently we're expected to care for and love these outspoken working class heroes with no criticism of their latent misogyny. Sorry, I won't. (Helen) (4-song CD, lyrics included, 33 East 8th St. Greenville, SC, 29611)

CIVILIZATION – Mid-tempo crust with a heavy ecological preservation vibe in the lyrics. I am reminded at times of HIS HERO IS GONE during the dark, sparsely played, heavy parts or SAMHAIN when the music is goth and mid-tempo rocking and BORN AGAINST during the heavy, mid-tempo riffs. This thing is pretty fucking awesome, and I think CIVILIZATION is just two people, but sounds like a full band, including a second guitarist! Great demo! (Vinnie) (6-song CD, lyrics included, Dead Tank, PO Box #61681, Jacksonville, FL 32236)

DEAF MUTATIONS – Frantic hardcore from members of various touted Toronto hardcore bands. Imagine the MECHT MENSCH songs on the *Master Tape* comp being spat out by URBAN WASTE's vocalist. I promise that I'm not exaggerating with that comparison. DEAF MUTATIONS blown out, lurching, and wild early-'80s hardcore style has some atmosphere to it. All the levels are in the red, guitar noise comes in and out, and the cracking, off vocals reek of desperation. This is a just a brief peak into the nasty, brilliant world of DEAF MUTATIONS and it's probably the best demo I've heard all year. (Cissie) (3-song tape, no lyrics included, slothcore@hotmail.com)

DEPOSITO DE CADAVERES –Nine songs of raging Spanish HC reminding me at times of TDK, and at other moments chaotic HC from bands of the Basque country. All lyrics are in Spanish and the information is scant, but the music is absolutely awesome. The scene in Spain seems to be a very strong one with loads of great DIY HC bands— DEPOSITO DE CADAVERES is no exception! Find it! (Vinnie) (9-song CD, lyrics included, jorge@radioruido.com)

DOCTOR SCIENTIST – DOCTOR SCIENTIST brings an extremely energetic synth sound with wailing and effected vocals from Philly. I really like the vocal styles, serious, monotonous, and multi-layered robotic harmonies in the vein of BIS and simple melodies and rhythms that remind me a lot of Baltimore's ABIKU. You can definitely dance to it, and the nature of the music lends itself to some costumes and performance attached to it. I don't know if I could watch these three dudes perform these songs without some drama added. (Helen) (9-song CD no lyrics included, www.myspace.com/doctorscientistband)

DRAGTOWN – I can only conclude that this small town Michigan band listens to an absolute shit ton of SICK OF IT ALL, all the way down to the singer's reproduction of Lou's voice. In this case this isn't a bad thing because there's no macho pretense, and I'm into this demo. The lyrics attack ignorance, materialism, conformity, and the first song gets extra points for the line, "small town hardcore is our way out, small town hardcore is what gives up hope." Fans of this genre who want a bit more substance than what they're generally offered should take note. (Dan) (5-song CD, lyrics included, www.myspace.com/dragtown)

ETG BLOOD – Great demo from former members of COPOUT, BURNED UP BLED DRY, NO PARADE, and FROM ASHES RISE. ETG BLOOD plays angry music that alternates from fast to mid-tempo and reminds me most of COPOUT. However, I'm ultimately reminded of TALK IS POISON—the riffs, the singer's cadence… Then again, the mid-tempo tracks are reminiscent of POISON IDEA, circa *Blank Blackout Vacant*. This is very cool, and I look forward to future releases. (Vinnie) (6-song CD, lyrics included, $5 ppd to PO Box 217, T.S., TN 37179)

FALSE ARREST – With the "FA" inside a circle and "make thrash not trash" scrawled on the cover, what I heard was no surprise. Trashily recorded and reminiscent of something on a Mystic comp mixed with LA'S WASTED YOUTH,—the singer sounds like he's about to live out a lifetime of revenge fantasies. I'm gonna guess FALSE ARREST is actual pissed off teenagers and not hip ex-straightedge twenty-somethings now messing around with Helvetica rub-on letters, and I can picture a chaotic live show filled with bodies flailing and falling all over each other. (Dan) (9-song CD, no lyrics included, 1617 Victory Dr. Apt B, Valdosta, GA 31601)

FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE – Reminds me of KID DYNAMITE, LIFETIME, that mid-'90s Jade Tree scene …Japanese HC act ASSAULT did this well. FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE has similar qualities to all of those bands, but where ASSAULT had metal breakdowns, FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE opts for emo and sung choruses. The recording is great, packaging superb, and the lyrics are very much of the "personal is political" school of practice. Fans of the above-mentioned bands, GOOD RIDDANCE, LAGWAGON, etc. should check it out. (Vinnie) (4-song CD, lyrics included, flagsofconvenience@gmail.com)

THE GUILT – This band, if this makes any sense, sounds like a product of DC ,but without sounding like any specific DC hardcore bands, though I'd guess that DAG NASTY and maybe SCREAM are influences. These songs have a timeless sound to them that still feels contemporary (in the good way), relevant, and anthemic without sounding like contrived fluff. The riffs and songs that are complex yet memorable, all backed with a production that's unpolished and powerful at the same time. Why the hell was this band not kicking around the area when I lived there? (Dan) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, 4712 Alton Pl. NW, Washington, DC, 20016, jamesdoubek@gmail.com)

IRON HAND – Heavy HC with a nod to Sweden and a salute to PDX heroes TRAGEDY. What differentiates IRON HAND most from TRAGEDY is the guitar leads—where the former is subtle, IRON HAND's are more commanding and all over the place. The singer is a screamer, and the lyrics touch on the typical issues (e.g., capitalism's ills, etc.), but they're written well and it's refreshing to read thought and not just mindless repetition. I enjoyed this the four times I listened to it. (Vinnie) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, $5 to 82 Fairview Ave, Middletown CT 06457)

KILL EVERYONE NOW! – Borrowing from NOMEANSNO or a coincidence? I think coincidence. KILL EVERYONE NOW plays punk a la DRUNKS WITH GUNS, maybe a taste of FLIPPER, but more straightforward than either of those bands. At times they lose the dirginess and remind me of early SF punk like BAD POSTURE. Don't forget the singer who screams like Jake of FILTH. The lyrics are bizarre to say the least, though one is an ode to Chris BCT. (Vinnie) (8-song CD, lyrics included, PO Box 521174, Salt Lake City, UT 84154)

LOSERS BEAT WINNERS – Sometimes you put on a new piece of music and it just hits you, "This sounds just like [*insert band here*]." Happened with this one—dead ringer for HÜSKER DÜ, even has that fuzzed out and intricate guitar playing so unique to Bob Mould. Think *Candy Apple Grey* and *Flip Your Wig* eras of HUSKER DU, with occasional bluegrass jams and a singer that alternates between Michael Stipe and Paul Westerberg. (Vinnie) (12-song CD, no lyrics, www.loserbeatwinners.com)

MANHATTAN SKYLINE – Fans of BOTCH, ACME, VOLUME 11, DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN, CROM-TECH, the '90s, etc., take note. Insanely technical and frenzied math-rock HC from Oslo. I've never been a fan of this style, but honestly it sounds like ten different parts, each accentuated with a four-count blast beat. If any of the above interests you, then check this out. (Vinnie) (11-song CD, no lyrics, www.fyiskformat.tigernet.no)

NO SOLUTION – A band with members of GERM ATTAK covering bands such as OLHO SECO, ENOLA GAY, DR. KNOW, KAAOS, E.A.T.E.R. VARUKERS, and inexplicably THE EXPLOITED given their otherwise quality taste. These songs are played well enough, and NO SOLUTION sounds like they have the right ingredients to be good on their own, but why bother releasing a tape of 21 covers? (Dan) (21-song cassette, no lyrics included, capitalicide@hotmail.com)

PREMO-VS.-THE WORLD – Whoa. This one is all over the place. Probably five to seven parts per song, each being more chaotic than the previous. Take FAT DAY and mix 'em with the first FYP 7", but this trio, unlike the latter, actually knows how to play! Spastic and chaotic is an understatement. Check it out! (Vinnie) (3-song CD, no lyrics, premovstheworld@gmail.com)

THE PROCLAMATION – Jangly pop-punk tunes with an emphasis on the pop. Could have been on Lookout! in the '90s, but it's not, so, there you go. Lyrics seem ripped straight-out of the writer's diary and range in topics of friends, romance, romance gone awry, etc. Mix one-quarter SMUGGLERS, GO SAILOR, AISLER'S SET, with the last quarter THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS—if they were drunk. (Vinnie) (11 song-CD, lyrics included, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402)

RAT PATROL – The cheesy 2 Unlimited sample that starts this demo should've been overtaken by the galloping drums and menacing bassline that begin the first song rather than going uninterrupted, but this is easily forgiven. They proclaim, "This is the Midwest," and this has a distinct midwest sound that draws from THE FIX, DIE KREUZEN, CLITBOYS and so forth, and firmly stands on its own. Get this. (Dan) (5-song CD, lyrics included, 138 Melrose Ave, South Elgin, IL 60177).

SHCIZOPHASIA – I think SHCIZOPHASIA is also ex-GERM ATTAK and lays out basically the same blueprint, but goes a few steps beyond CONFUSE worship. The guitar parts are more characteristic of noise music (as opposed to just "noise not music") and the vocals point more to late-'70s/early-'80s LA or NY punk than the obvious. If I were prone to hyperbole, I might say something for the final song like "imagine members of LEBENDEN TOTEN and the BLACK LIPS jamming." (Dan) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, capitalicide@hotmail.com)

STATE POISON – Make no mistake, these Frenchies-plus-one-Floridian sleep cuddled next to their Disorder records, passed out with a gluebag in hand. The glue fumes work to help them create the magnificent chaotic madness that is STATE POISON. They've got the sound pretty nailed down. Most of the songs feature a variety of gurgles, blarghs, and random shouts from the vocalist. The drums are exactly as you would expect with a semi hollow sound, big rolls, and clacka, clacka, clacka. The guitar isn't totally buried in noise, but it makes a mess of racket with squealing notes when it needs to. These songs have a bit of craft to them as well. I would align this with SWANKYS or early CONFUSE, before lumping it in with the crasher crust scene. Overall, STATE POISON has enough ineptness, ridiculousness, catchiness, and creativity to pull this style off. Download the demo for free at statepoison.blogspot.com. (Cissie) (10-song CD, lyrics included, c/o Alex Simon, 11 Rue Chalopin, 69007 Lyon, France, xxgluestickxxbrigadexx@yahoo.fr)

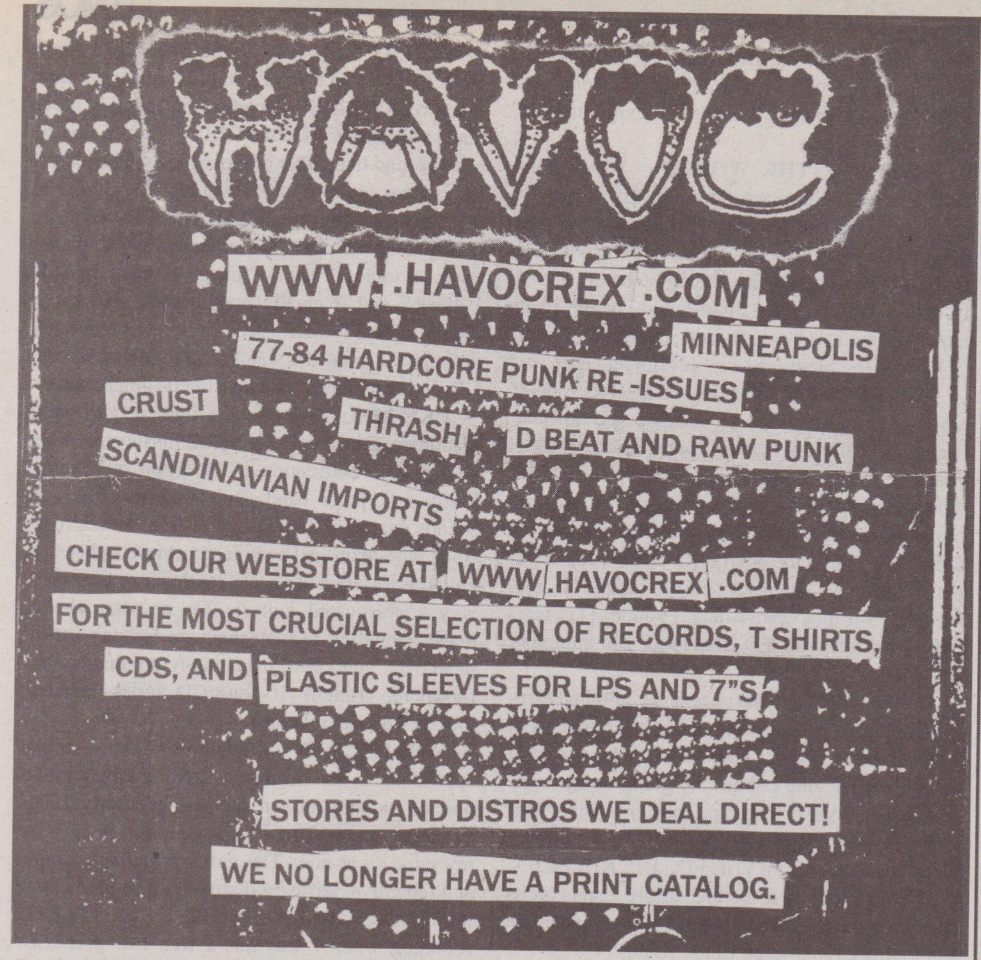
STREET LEGAL – Vocals sound like Annie from THIS IS MY FIST!, and the music reminds me of SURRENDER—loads of meandering guitar leads and snare rolls, but STREET LEGAL doesn't *really* sound like either of those bands. The recording is great and lo-fi in the vein of GALAXIE 500. So…mix those three bands and add CRASS to the concoction, but instead of anarchy, lyrics concern personal topics. They do "Image of Man" by THE WIPERS and it greatly compliments the rest of their songs. STREET LEGAL is real unique and definitely a band to watch for. (Vinnie) (6-song CD, lyrics included, undamastreet@gmail.com)

UKE BOX – They finally figured out how to reanimate dead punk heroes. Unfortunately, they wasted the resurrection of D. Boon on a corny Philly folk punk band. But seriously, folks, he sounds exactly like D. Boon!!! Yes...a bizarro D. Boon who is instead a ukulele virtuoso rather than guitar. It is truly a comical experience to hear these very sophisticated guitar solos and the ukelele player stuggling to play them on his tiny instrument. And you know, it's actually not that bad for folk punk. (Helen) (10-song CD, lyrics included, jbukebox@hotmail.com)

WHALELIMB – Whalelimb takes me to that special place, and makes me feel the same desolation of hanging out in the late-'90s/early-2000s Savannah scene. This Washington duo is blowing my mind right now. The guitar is perfect, simple and repetitive, jarringly dissonant. It reminds me a lot of how I remember THE JESUS LIZARD sounding when I was but a wee lad. WHALELIMB is raw, disillusioned, simple, and tortured. This is the kind of music that encouraged me to become a punk in the first place. (Helen) (14-song CD, lyrics included, whalelimb.blogspot.com)

THE WHITE ROSE – Early-'80s style hardcore, including some touches of ANTI-CIMEX, with the best kind of buzzsaw guitar tone and trebly, cymbal-heavy drumming that's shaky and frantic, but never misses a beat. This demo is over all too soon. All the overused adjectives like "ripping," "raging," and "killer" are applicable and then some. Write this address to get this and the RAT PATROL demo, and tell them to get some vinyl out stat. (Dan) (5-song CD, lyrics included, 138 Melrose Ave, South Elgin, IL 60177).

V/A-S.T.U.M.P. CLUB – Compilation of twenty (!!!) different bands from the Portland area. Most are on the punk or rock sides of punk rock, as opposed to the HC side. My favorite tracks were THE TRAMPS (pop-punk reminding me of THE QUEERS), RED HERRING (reminded me of THE SLITS), THE ESTRANGED ("Statues In a Room," first song of theirs I've heard and enjoyed), JOHNNY X AND THE GROADIES (black metal done pretty well), and AUTOPILOT (accordions!). *S.T.U.M.P.* is an acronym for *Self Taught Underage Music Program,* and I think it's a club in Portland, though I am unsure due to the lack of information enclosed. Cool comp! I recommend writing them for a copy! (Vinnie) (21-song CD, no lyrics, www.myspace.com/thestumppdx)



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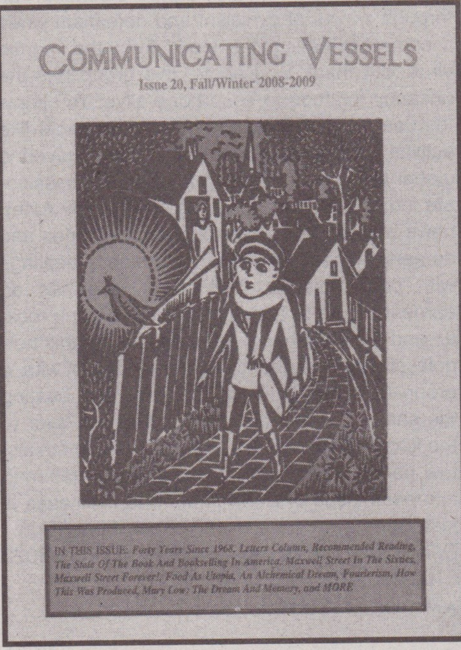
ZINES

Send zines for review to: MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. Please include the following info on a separate piece of paper with your zine: postpaid price, international price, do you take trades?, size, copied or printed?, number of pages, language, mailing address, website address, email address.

Reviews by:
(DA) Diane Anastasio
(JD) Judy Balmin
(JB) Julia Booze
(KC) Karoline Collins
(LG) Layla Gibbon
(DG) Dan Goetz
(BG) Bob Goldie
(CH) Cassie Harwood
(MJ) Meredith Johnes
(JM) Jeff Mason
(CR) Casey Ress
(CI) Cissie Scurlock
(DS) Dionne Stevens

AB #7 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 19 pgs
This publication looks and reads a bit like a Dr. Bronner's label. It's a little schizo. The first article has a description and instructions on how to build a "tribode," which is a sturdy structure that several people can live in on the ocean. The how-to piece abruptly stops and without warning, title, or other indication suddenly turns into a few different people's impressions about living in small towns. There are a few more rambling pages of untitled writing about pollution, nutrition, and healthcare. Some of it is written in an informative style, and some in a personal narrative. I suspect they might be letters and responses from readers, but I can't tell. Then there are definitely some book reviews by Bert and Holly. They have beef against low-carb diets and argue against them. They also seem to be deeply enmeshed in the nit-picky details of the pro vs. con debate of the vegan diet—lots of numbers, statistics, and references to studies. "Fuzzy math" up the a-hole. Overall, the size two font and no-titles thing is kind of insane and not terribly inviting. I have to mention the handwritten advice to the reviewer (me) on how to write a review—that is much too anal. Don't do that. (JD)
Lisa Ahne / PO Box 181 / Alsea, OR 97324

AMERICA? #15 / $2 ppd
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – 48 pgs
Florida zines, like so many Florida bands, have a similar feeling to them, and in the case of the zines, it is more than the aesthetic—though there are similarities running from lettering fonts to cartooning, it's the pervasive mood felt within the pages. Living in Florida is akin to living in an American wasteland of endless highways through swampy marshlands, plagues of mosquitoes, and vast gated communities and strip plazas that pollute the landscape. Reading through the pages of *America?* invokes images of the lonely writer sitting at a Denny's somewhere in that realm, drawing in a notebook over endless cups of cheap coffee. About half of these pages are amusing Pettibon-esque cartoons, a few of which make up an interesting narrative recalling the early '90s and the first Gulf War. Also included is a very good interview with the late Mikey Dread, who all discerning punks should be familiar with, at the very least for his involvement with the Clash. A few random rants and tidbits (of which I wish there were more of because I enjoyed reading them) and an interview with Japanther fill out the issue. Good stuff. (BG).
Travis Magoo / PO Box 13077 / Gainesville, FL 32604-1077
obscurist.press@gmail.com


COMMUNICATING VESSELS
Issue 20, Fall/Winter 2008-2009
IN THIS ISSUE: *Forty Years Since 1968, Letters Column, Recommended Reading, The State Of The Book And Bookselling In America, Maxwell Street In The Sixties, Maxwell Street Forever!, Food As Utopia, An Alchemical Dream, Fourierism, How This Was Produced, Mary Low: The Dream And Memory, and MORE*

COMMUNICATING VESSELS #20 / donation by cash or stamps
7 x 8.5 – printed – 48 pgs
I've seen a few issues of this publication now, and in terms of content this is my favorite yet. It still is a pretty mild brew, by punk standards, but disgust for capitalist society and the state is evident. The editor pines for simpler times, even going so far as to reprint a Lewis Mumford piece about the beauty to be found in a medieval village. When writing about today's world he (?) doesn't hesitate to talk shit on the ubiquitous cell phone, or the youth of today staring at screens all day instead of reading a book. The editor writes on his time spent working at a chain bookstore, which leads to his despair regarding literacy in America. One does meet more shitheads working in a shitty place. I work at a bookstore, and everyday I see someone who doesn't appear bookish buying Cicero or Zizek or somesuch. Contributors detail the open-air gatherings on Chicago's Maxwell Street, which the city plans to eliminate by giving the space to a university. There's plenty more to read, including *Communicating Vessels* favorite K. Rexroth. The zine is filled with text and lightly sprinkled with artwork and what passes for advertisements. The aesthetic is quite similar to *The Match*, in no small part, as the editor has been taking correspondence courses in printing from the Tucson firebrand. The pricing is radical, by which I mean it's not "sold" per se, but traded for donations. Domestic postage on my copy is $1.34, so they can come close to breaking even if you send two bucks—more would actually help them get the next issue out. (JM)
3527 NE 15th Avenue, #127 / Portland, OR 97212

THE CRAP SHEET / free with stamp
8.5 x 11 – copied – 1 pg
So, this is like a fake column that dude prints hundreds of one-sheet copies to stuff into the free music weekly in his town because they rejected his offer to write for them. I totally approve! Except, then it gets all rude and ignorant and makes fun of fat chicks that do burlesque (c'mon dude, really?) and the girl he works with that wears the Motörhead shirt that doesn't know all their albums. He is just mad that she won't talk to him, probs. At points it is funny and juvenile, like with a comic of Batman impersonating Johnny Cash impersonating Elvis or something? And in all the best and snotty ways…sometimes too it is just a mouthful of old garbage. He hates how photographers think that you should get out of their way at shows, as if they are important because they are taking 1,000,000 pictures with their digi-cam, and I love that he spells "voila" as "wah-la." (JB)
bigmouth25@hotmail.com

DIMWIT #1 / free or trade
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 12 pgs
Here we have the first English issue of *Dimwit*, which had around six issues written in French in the past. It's a short little fanzine that features an interview with a Greek distro, Alcoholic Desaster, as well as one with De Novissimis from Ireland. The interviews are pretty clearly done through email with a bunch of disjointed questions in no apparent order, but they're still pretty interesting to read, especially since the questions are hella broad. I really like the first interview, because he talks a lot about the death of cassette tapes alongside a wave of vinyl-worship among punks these days. *Dimwit* is rounded all out at the end with a bunch of zine, record, and tape reviews of mostly grind stuff. (DA)
27 Rue de Lattre de Tassigny / 71100 Chalon sur Saone, France
jojodumbass@yahoo.fr
www.langtner.narod.ru

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DISTORT #18
8.5 x 11 – copied – 16 pgs
The newest installation of this totally manic and captivating Aussie zine. This issue is all about the darker side of the Straightjacket Nation summer US tour, written by the vocalist Dan, a self-proclaimed anti-socialite with allergies and record-nerd tendencies. *Distort* has got a beautifully fucked up cut-and-paste aesthetic that mirrors Dan's totally engaging and melodious, yet A.D.D.-driven writing style. Each chapter of this issue is named after a Straightjacket Nation song and includes either short snippets of interviews with bands like Brain Handle and Condominium, or his own personal musings on the downfalls of American hardcore culture and the difficulties of touring and producing interviews that aren't mind-numbingly boring. He merges politics with mental health and punk rituals as he describes the people and bands he met during the two months of his life that he had most anticipated for over ten years. If you haven't already picked up this issue, give it a go, but act fast 'cause this shit disappears super quick. Well done. (DA)
PO Box 239 / North Carlton / VIC / 3054 / Australia
distorttheworld@gmail.com

DOLL #257 January 2009 / ?
7.5 x 10.5 – printed – 134 pgs – Japanese
Another issue of the long running Japanese underground magazine, *Doll*. There's an interview with Brazilian all girl hardcore band Infect, and others with the Mods, Nicotine, the Cokes, the Bascillus Brains, the Street Beats, the Birthday and many other bands that I can't write because I am limited by the fact that I can only speak English. There's a feature on Sugi, who did the cover art for many records that are probably in your collection, Selfish, Judgement, Gudon, Hellshock, Warhead, Crude, Starving Dog Eats Master… *Doll* reruns a lot of content from *MRR*, and it would be awesome if we had someone in Japan who would be down to cover some of the rad Japanese hardcore and punk music for us… Just a thought. (LG)
No 303 Aota bldg. / 3-1-9, Kita, Kohenji / Suginami-Ku / Tokyo / Japan

EARTH FIRST! November-December 2008 / $4.50 US and Canada
11 x 17 – printed – 32 pgs
It's good to know that the *Earth First!* folks are out there fighting the good fight. Personally, I go through waves of cynicism and defeatism when it comes to saving the world from the human virus, but thank Bog above this group has the uncanny fortitude to keep hope alive. You know the deal when it comes to these newspaper-like activist journals: informative articles covering global activism, interesting letters from passionate individuals (and the occasional loony tune), news blips covering environmental victories and defeats across the world, and some dealings with prison issues. This issue also has an earnest tribute to a slain activist and punk rocker, and the story has a good ending, for this horrible situation at least, which winds up with a group of punks catching the killer and beating the shit out of him (before handing him over to the fuzz). Some reviews and poetry fill up the last few pages. There's a lot of substance jammed into each issue of *Earth First!*, and the cause is just. Send away for one and check it out. (BG)
Daily Planet Publishing – *Earth First!* / POB 3023 / Tucson, AZ 85702
www.earthfirstjournal.org

KING-CAT: COMICS AND STORIES #69 / $3ppd
5.5 x 8 – copied – 32 pgs
This zine gets the cute prize of the month. The author's favorite kitty sadly passed away recently, and he gives a comic account of the process of deciding to adopt some new kitties and how that all went down. It's pretty tame. There are also some other autobiographical stories about his college years, letters from readers, and a special mid-life crisis top-40 section. The first piece titled "That Moon" is kind of trippy. I can't claim to understand it. But to make up for that, I definitely enjoyed the bit where the author shows us how he accidentally gave himself a comb over. *King Cat* isn't the most exciting thing I've ever read in my life, but the back cover portrait of the two new kitties is undeniably adorable. (JD)
John Porcellino / PO Box 18888 / Denver, CO 80218
www.king-cat.net

KISSOFF #13 / $3ppd
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – screened cover – 68 pgs
I have been a long time fan of *Kissoff* and remember reading an early issue of it for the first time on a BART ride to Oakland about seven years ago. I am stoked to see that Chris is still writing and producing this excellent little pocket-sized gem. Personal stories of community, documentation, travel, Soweto, South African accents, profound claustrophobia in the middle of nowhere, breaking up with a partner and a typewriter (with a surprising result down the road), creeping shadows and dark echoes, smoking on freezing balconies in the dead of winter and isolated moments of happiness. This particular issue feels pretty melancholy and transitional, perhaps more so than previous ones. I feel like there wasn't as much continuity in the order of the stories as there has been in past efforts, but that does not take away from the quality of the writing/storytelling. Definitely a great "I'm hunkered down for the winter and I need to order a whole bunch of zine"' selection. Highly recommended! (KC)
Chris Kiss / PO Box 42 / Station P / Toronto, ON M5S 2S6 / Canada

SUPER ROCK MAGAZINE
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JANUARY 2009
NO.257
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THE BIRTHDAY | THE BACILLUS BRAINS
US UNDERGROUND HARDCORE LABEL

LATER DAZE #1 / $0.25
5.5 x 8.25 – copied – 16 pgs
Though a bit shaky, even for a debut issue, *Later Daze* actually has content with some value. The essay about nudity is a bit strange, but the music reviews and interview are solid enough. No doubt Keith was intentionally going for the "rough

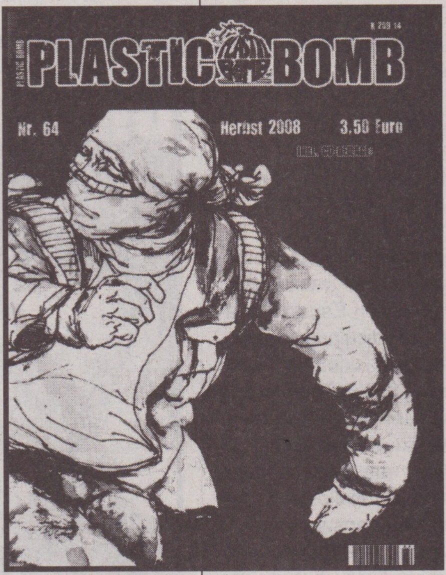
and ready” aesthetic, but the handwriting and layout issues (margins! I can’t read what gets cut off!) do make it a bit difficult to read. (CR)
Keith Riley / TC5-710B / 796 Font Blvd / San Francisco, CA 94132
theheist@rock.com

LEVIL UNIFORM #10 / $?
5 x 8 – printed – 32 pgs
Levil Uniform is a music/skate zine that has the visual aesthetic of a cheesy sales pamphlet. The musical focus is metal (Wormstock II), crust (Dog Soldier), and hardcore (Vitamin X) and the interviews are short and to the point. This edition includes a chat with an artist named Lindsay Jackson—the only woman in the rag, and she was given the title “babe of the issue.” Ouch. The best part of *Levil Uniform* is the skate photography. They’ve got some really cool shots and the slick paper that the magazine is printed on actually compliments the photos. *Levil Uniform* seems like the type of thing that you’d pick up in the freebies area of a coffee shop or record store—a slick magazine lacking in substance, filled with random content and cheesy ads. Although in the scheme of things there aren’t that many ads; the shiny paper is playing tricks on my eyes. I can’t imagine anyone paying for this, but I guess it’s OK for flipping through on the bus, so you can avoid talking to the crazies. (CI)
3004 NE 68th / Portland, OR 97213
www.leviluniformthemagazine.com

OH NO! THE ROBOT #10 / $2 ppd
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 14 pgs
Oh No! The Robot is split into a series of vignettes about different aspects of a fictitious character based on the author. Subjects range from relationships, family, sex, and badly executed jokes that that were meant to be clever and sarcastic. While some of the drawings are sort of funny in a stupid sense (picture of boy holding beer saying, “I love you,” girl says, “shut up”) the writing is pretty longwinded and not very engaging. This might be more for someone who enjoys reading perzines about relationships.
(MJ)
Chrix Morix / 23 Crystal Villa / Warman, SK SOKO41 Canada
ohnotherobot@hotmail.com

PLASTIC BOMB #64 / 3.50 Euro
8.5 x 11 – printed – 82 pgs – German
Plastic Bomb has an updated, spiffy newsprint look this month and I think it’s a welcome change. Also, this issue is missing the catalog, so I won’t be buying any Tragedy polos or Inferno Chuck Taylors this month. On to the stuff…this month we have Deutsch spoken interviews with Adicts, Black Fag, Cock Sparrer, Assassinators, Helldriver, Menace, Let’s Fight White Pride, Profane Existence, No Way Records, Captain Planet, Oi Polloi, and more. As always the content is rounded out with standard zine and record reviews and showlistings. (CI)
Postfach 100205 / D-47002 / Duisberg, Germany
www.plastic-bomb.de

PUNK//PING//PONK #1 & 2 / $3 or trade
6.75 x 8.25 – copied – 36 & 40 pgs
One look at these issues and you know they are total *crust-ophilia*. Even an average quality crust zine is great to me—I am a sucker for the look, and ads for and reviews of obscure bands. These were especially interesting as they originate in Selangor, Malaysia and cover a lot of SE Asian bands. The first issue has interviews with Distrust (Singapore), Peace or Annihilation (Indonesia), and Krasskepala and Osmantikos from Malaysia—the latter being real long. These talks (done via email) are serviceable, not outstanding. The second issue has talks with Pazahora (Singapore), Kah-Roe-Shi (Malaysia—they were formerly called Union of Slave), Pisschrist (Australia), as well as the Swedish band Warvictims and Brazil’s Armagedom. This issue also has a page defining anarcha-feminism and a page about the (at the time, upcoming) DIY Femme Fest held in Kuala Lumpur at the end of ’08. Both issues have a few ads and some music reviews. The photography is reproduced fairly well, though I think the pictures are from the internet. The editor says he’s not good at reviewing music, but he’s no worse than the vast majority of punk reviewers—the bar is set low. He (?) is stoked on one of my favorite musical formats—the cassette. He also says he’s having financial problems from trying to do a label. Considering that these are the first two issues, I’d say *Punk//Ping//Ponk* is off to a good start. (JM)
No. 7B / Blok 3 / Seksyen 16 / 40200 Shah Alam / Selangor / Malaysia
punkpingponk@gmail.com



RAZORCAKE #47 / $4
8 x 11 – printed – 112 pgs
Some usual goodies in this issue, and as always, entertaining columns and informative record and zine reviews. Although I could probably come up with ways to talk shit about Reverend Norb’s column, I don’t think I can because he makes up the most hilarious things to say about the most random subjects. For example, he refers to the songs of Kid Rock as being like “jumping on the pedal that turns on the nitro-burning generator that blasts the ten gallons of sub-freezing name brand ginger ale back up your dick at the rate of like a gallon per second.” I couldn’t have been happier to see the front cover dedicated to one of the most wonderfully retarded bands: Chicago pop punkers the Sass Dragons. Not only are their songs catchy as fuck and funny (I’m thinking of “Bong Rip in E Minor, Smells like Shit Spirit”), but their interviews are always promisingly offensive and immature, which is a good thing. Other interviews include the excellent garage punk band from Texas, Hex Dispensers, and Full of Fancy, Rager, and Ninja Gun. (MJ)
Razorcake / Gorsky Press, Inc. / PO Box 42129 / Los Angeles, CA 90042
www.razorcake.org

SCARED OF DYING / $?
6.75 x 8.25 – copied – 40 pgs
An art school kid put together this collection of drawings and photographs with a little writing to explain some of the locales. There is a focus on his local community, like a new pet store, which opened next to one that’s been there twenty years, and some homeless artists he met in the woods. I wasn’t particularly enthused about *Scared of Dying*. A painting he did is reproduced, and I think I’d like it in person—it captures the desolate look of bare tree limbs as a backdrop for the homeless couple. But as a zine, I went through it in five minutes, even going slow, and wasn’t sorry to put it down. He writes of being inspired by “small encounters with ordinary people,” but I found the contents to be just too ordinary. (JM)
lukeoverin@hotmail.co.uk

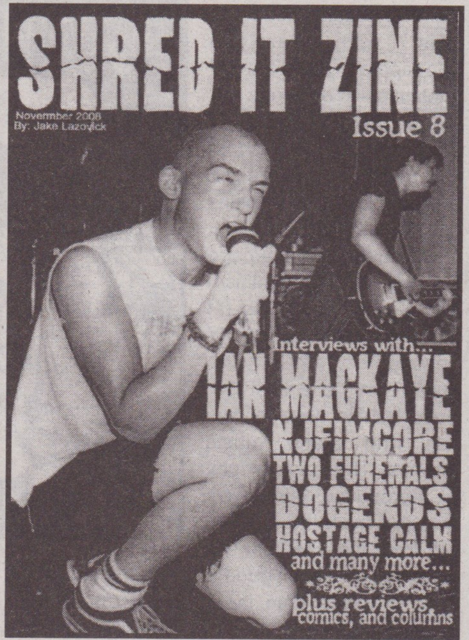
SELF-AWARE #2 / $2 US, $3 world
8.5 x 11 – copied – 32 pgs
A classic hardcore zine with an Obstruction tour diary, a really crappy interview with Weekend Nachos, one with Max of 625 Thrash, and a selection of other random writings. Some of it made me laugh out loud, the way the kid that wrote the tour report capitalized certain words like gay, liberal, jazz, and blues, and the fact that he went a show where Gutfux(!) and Planetpiss(?!?) played. Those are definitely the most ridiculous band names I have heard in a long ass time. Anyway *Self-Aware* is a cool, if earnest, report of what’s going on in the Southern hardcore scene. It was funny reading all the different parts where dudes talked about all the covers that the bands they were in or were going to see played, and how bummed one of them was when some other band covered the SSD song their band was gonna do. Kind of ridiculous—made me think of that Red Cross song “Cover Band.” Some of it reads a little like a school report, just the writing style I guess, but these kids are doing something cool here. Maybe the teenage thrash-nachos-pizza-taco scene isn’t my bag, but the kids will have their say, and how much art can you take anyway? (LG)
2513 J Woodbrook Ln / Monroe, NC 28110
jrobbins85@gmail.com, ITLWest@hotmail.com

SHRED IT ZINE #8 / $2
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 28 pgs
This DC based zine contains short interviews with Ian Mackaye, Two Funerals, NJFINCORE, Dogends, Hostage Calm, and ChristopherXWalken. There are somewhat short inconclusive columns about subjects ranging from eating lumpia then going to see a movie at a mall in Manilla, to why smoking is bad, and some comic strips too. I don't know, it seemed like a lot of effort went into this, but it somehow came off as kind of half assed? The interviews and columns were so brief it was hard to get much out of them… (LG)
Jake Lazovick / 350-C Forfune Terrace / PMB 109 Potomac, MD 20854

SINK HOLE #14 / $1
8.5 x 11 – copied – 30 pgs
A cringe-worthy effort with a slightly above average cut-and-paste layout. A few xcolumnsx (as they put it) on topics such as the injustice of the two-party system, choosing a roller derby name, and one woman's love affair (her words) with Against Me, an insulting "punk en Espanol" feature that offers translations of ridiculous phrases, instructions on how to make a sock monkey, and a few comics that just aren't funny. There's also a very oddly formatted interview where a number of people, including Joe Queer and Scotty of DEADFALL/TANKCRIMES, are asked inane questions about things such as Halloween costumes and LL Cool J and their answers are all printed together. *Sink Hole* is a zine that espouses how DIY changed their lives, but it also includes a full-page ad for some fest sponsored by Alternative Press and PBR. (DG)
Bacon Towne / PO Box 1063 / Tallevast, FL 34270
www.myspace.com/bacontownerecords

$PARE ¢HANGE #19 / $1 or $2ppd
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 22 pgs
This issue is part of a continuing series called "The Road Away From Home," and the main story here (separated into quasi-chapters) has the author skipping a school dance to go to a party, getting grounded, making a failed attempt at running away from home, and turning his father's decision to send him to a psychologist against him when the psychologist suggests the whole family attend the sessions (this ends on a cliffhanger). There's also a funny shorter story about getting stoned and penning a story that wows his creative writing class, then admitting his state to the class after a one-sided discussion on the war on drugs. The stories are interesting and well-written with a smart and cynical edge, and most anyone who spent their adolescence getting pushed around by people demonstrably less intelligent than them (with the occasional public outsmarting) should be able to relate. (DG)
PO Box 6023 / Chattanooga, TN 37401

SUGAR SUGAR / $?
5.5 x 8.5 – copied – 16 pgs
Sugar Sugar is what the name implies, sweet, a personal childhood memory told by a young lady in Texas involving candy even. Her writing style is similar to Chelsea Starr, or Michelle Tea, funny in that conversational way—often enjoyed read aloud, but I did not see the punk rock connection. I don't think all zines need to be political or about music and its surrounding scenes, but I must declare my observation anyway, to preserve maximum integrity. The art was kinda cutesy, japanime' middle school, but for all I know, this could have be created by someone in that age range. I liked the story. (DS)
Cassie J.Sneider International / PO Box 4156 / Austin, Texas 78765



TODAYS FAVORITE ADULT ACTORS AND THEIR FAVORITE FLOWERS / $10
4.5 x 6.5 – printed – 20 pgs
The price tag startled me, although the amount of work and love put into creating this zine is immediately apparent. Inside is a series of "collector's cards," if you will. Each of the sixteen cards is detailed with a hunky international male adult film star and his favorite flower. Instead of stats on the back you get an enchanted tale as to why each particular flower was chosen as the favorite. The cards slip in and out of plastic sleeves, which function as pages, to keep sticky fingerprints off the goods. I am charmed by *Todays Favorite Adult Actors and Their Favorite Flowers*—I think it is a bonified art zine, the kinda thing you hoard. I just re-read this review for revisions, and it sounds like an ad for some Franklin Mint bullshit. No comparison! (DS)
info@eyerocketbooks.com

TOXIC SHOCK GIRLDOM #1 / $3 or trade
5.5 x 4.25 – copied – screened cover – 60 pgs
I am a little torn on how to review *Toxic Shock Girldom*. On the whole, I totally support Hannah Neurotica's writing and efforts. In parts, specifically the poetry (six pages) *Toxic Shock Girldom* is just not my cup of tea. That being said, this is a very solid pocket-sized zine with an emphasis on sex/fantasy/erotica. The bulk of the writing is *very* personal and powerful (sex with a stranger, childhood sexuality, masturbation). This is all rounded out with an excellent rant on porn, punk and feminism. Cut and paste layout, with a little bonus zine called *Pig Girl* in the center-fold. I am looking forward to seeing future issues. Has anyone coined the term "perotica" zine yet? Like "perzine," but way sexier?! If no one has, then let me just throw that out there… (KC)
Hannah Neurotica / lickmyclit@gmail.com

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #90/91 / $2.75
8.5 x 5.5 – copied – 64 pgs
This issue celebrates the 16th anniversary, tons of band and zine/comic reviews as usual, with some political commentary and now dated election discussion, and a footnote-clad explanation of the financial meltdown (for real, footnotes), plus a really cute, happy interview of the New Bloods. The classics, if you will, get mentioned in a reprint of some old interviews that feature one or two questions, and then there are some scene updates and furry pictures. (JB)
The Trouble With Normal / PO Box 1444 / Columbia, MO 65205
ttwn@hotmail.com

TRUST 132/05 / 2.50 Euros
11.5 x 8.5 – printed – 32 pgs – German
Reviewing an issue of *Trust* is like reviewing this dear rag that you're now holding. *Trust* has been around forever (since the mid '80s at least), and each issue contains a reliable load of interviews, articles, columns, and a ton of record and zine reviews. What really sets this apart from *MRR* is the fact that it's a bit more polished—or at least it's on a higher quality paper—and it contains lots of upcoming dates for bands on tour. Oh, and it's in German! I try to read along, because everything looks so interesting to read, but I can only make out a few simple words here and there. Where's my translator, dammit! This issue contains an article on fanzines vs. message boards, interviews with Dead Child, Antitainment, Julith Krishun, and a ton of reviews. If you can hurdle the language barrier, this is definitely recommended! (BG)
Postfach 11 07 62 / 28087 Bremen, Germany
www.trust-zine.de

TURNING THE TIDE Volume 21 Number 6 / $1
17 x 11.5 – printed – 10 pgs
This issue of this long-running anti-racist newspaper is devoted to prisons and those confined within. Put out by the Los Angeles chapter of the ARA, *Turning the Tide* has always served as a journal of anti-racist politics. Focusing on prisoner issues is a critical aspect of racism in America and this issue delivers a thoughtful compilation of articles, some written by prisoners, covering a range of topics from the election of Obama, prisoner unity and attempts to disrupt it, the war in Afghanistan, and community emergency response in a post-Katrina world. As usual *Turning the Tide* offers a serious journal of race and racism in America. (CR)
Anti-Racist Action Publishers / PO Box 1055 / Culver City, CA 90232

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Fri, Jan. 9th
Ska Night!
Chris Murray
Monkey
Flip the Switch
Whiskey Avengers
Aught 7

Sat, Jan. 10th
The Measure [SA] (NJ)
Trainwreck Riders
Onion Flavored Rings
Sour Patch
Kicked In

Fri, Jan. 16th • $6
Static Thought Tour Benefit
La Plebe
Static Thought
The Runs
Unkut Hunks

Sat, Jan. 17th
Babyland
Mr. Vicious
Absence

Sun, Jan. 18th • $7
Warbringer
Zombie Holocaust
Devastator
Laceration
Horse Flesh

Fri, Jan. 23rd • $10 • doors @ 7:30
Cattle Decapitation
Psyopus (NY)
Book of the Black Earth (WA)
Gigan • Warscythe

Sat, Jan. 24th • $8-10
Iron Lung
Extortion (Australia)
Lack of Interest (L.A.)
Godstomper
In Disgust
California Love
Car Vs. Los

Fri, Jan. 30th
Pansy Division
Kepi the Band
Secretions
Boats

Sat, Jan. 31st
Hunx and His Punx
Thorns of Life
The Re-Volts
Off With Their Heads
Comadre

Sun, Feb. 1st
Intronaut
Bastard Noise
Skin Horse
Devil's Son In Law

February 6th–8th
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Record Swap on Sunday (free!)

Fri, Feb. 13th
Arise
Embryonic Devourment
Tousandswilldie
Destroy the Colossus
Claud Oxidado

Sat, Feb. 14st
Fog Of War
Zombie Holocaust
Exmortus
Bonded By Blood
Rattlehead
Invection

Upcoming radness:
Zero Boys w/Stitches (2/27)
Zero Boys w/Black Fork (2/21)
Ceremony (2/28)
Plan 9 (3/9)
UGZ Speed Trials (3/20 & 3/21)

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